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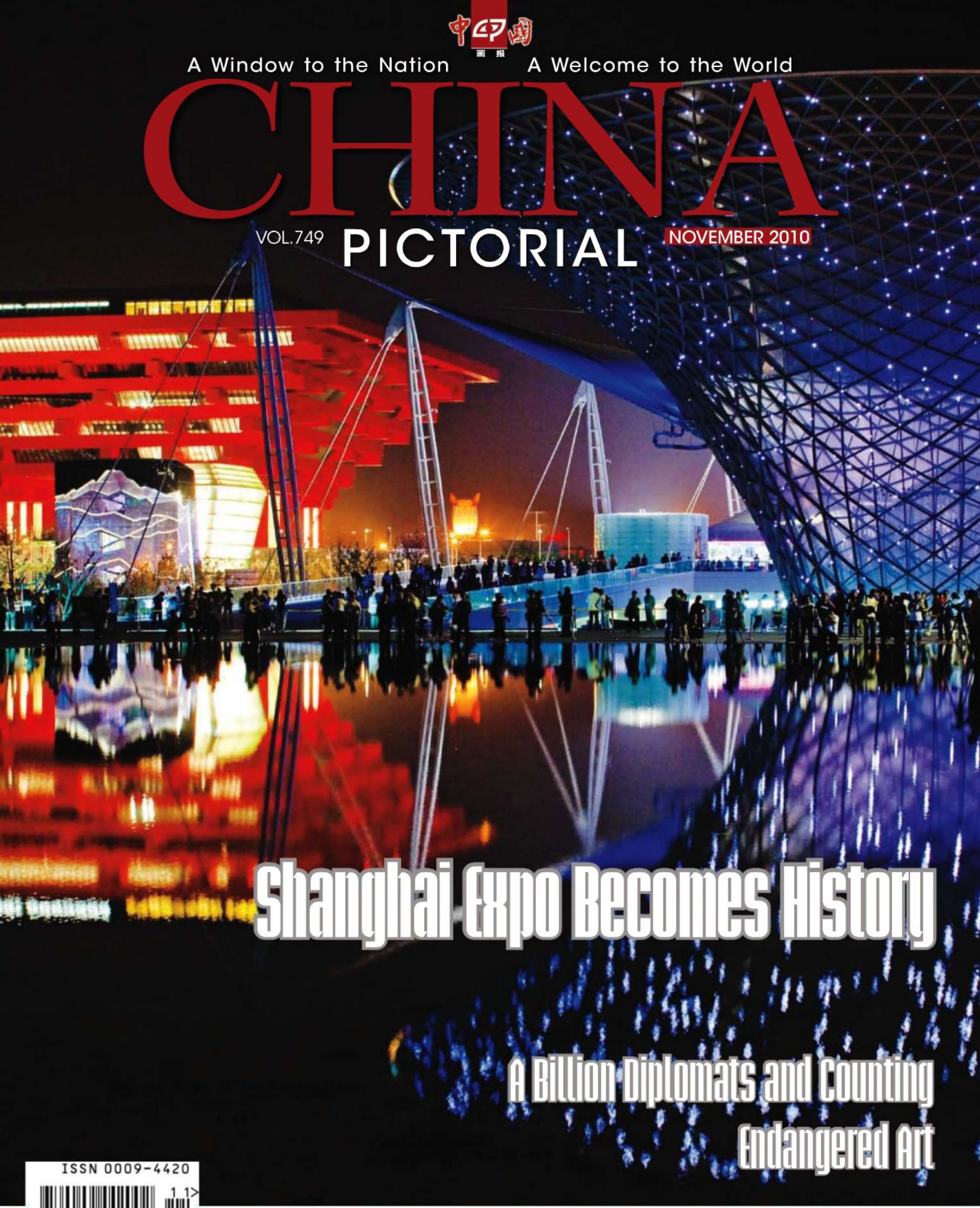
VOL.749

NOVEMBER 2010



Shanghai Expo Becomes History

A Billion Diplomats and Counting

Endangered Art

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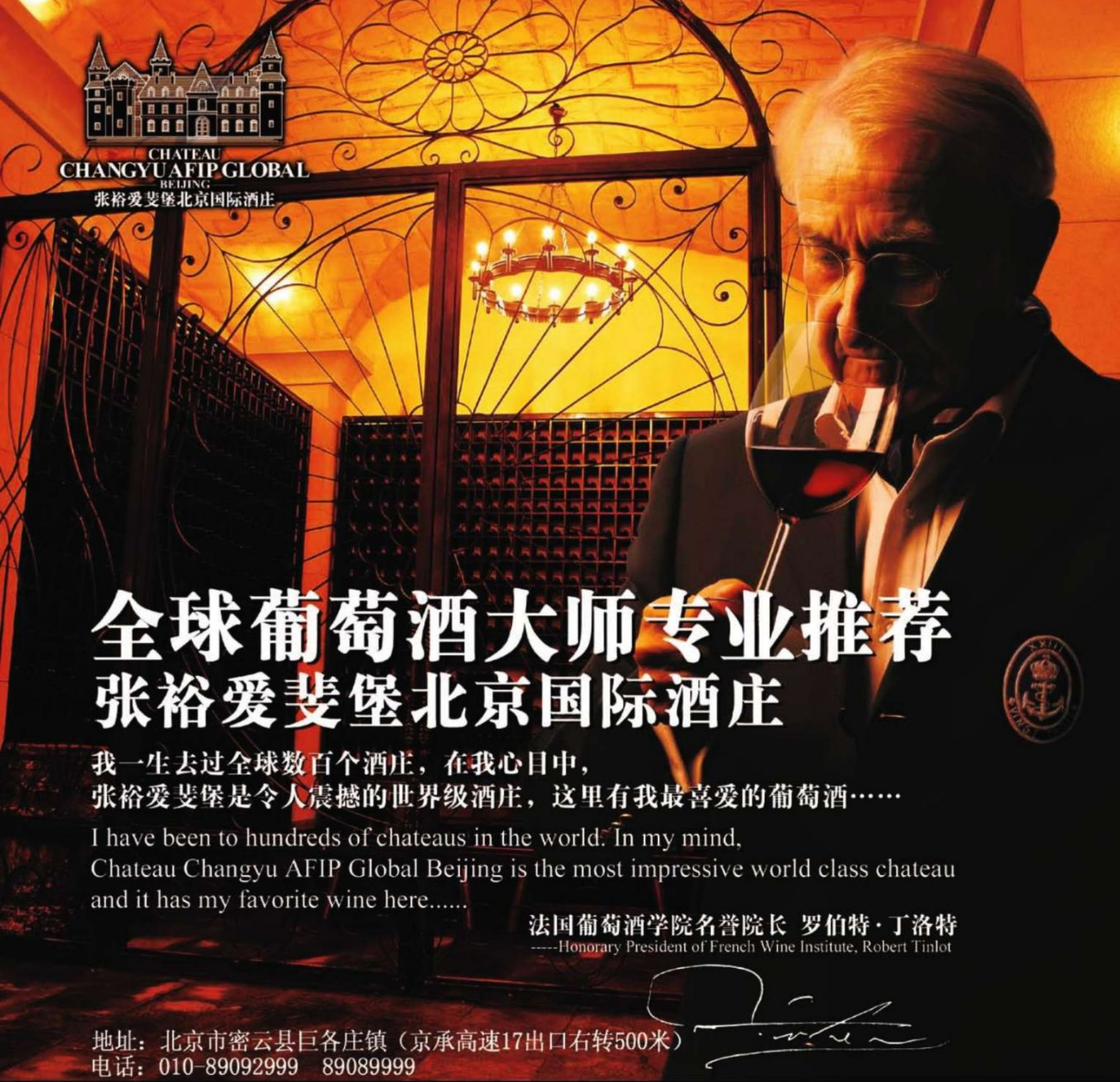

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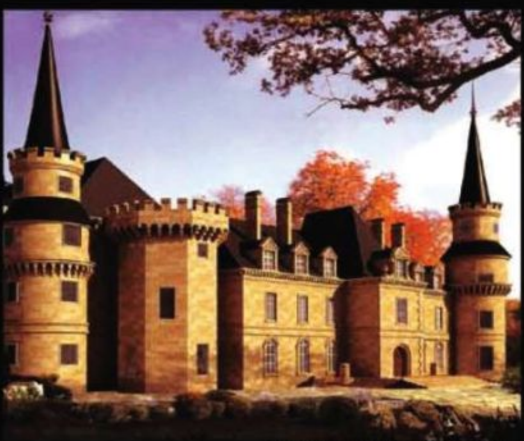

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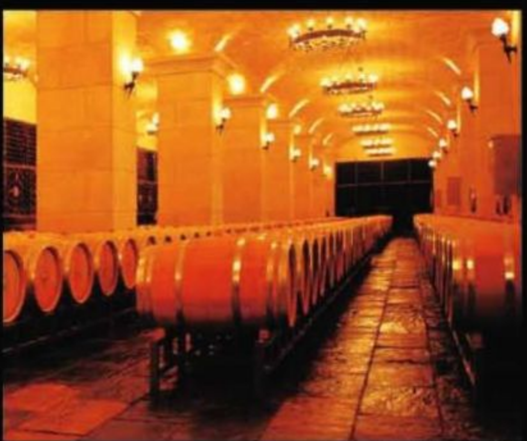

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CON

Snapshot 4

Now

A Billion Diplomats and Counting 8
China's Public Diplomacy Efforts
Hometown of Chang'e 10

Features

Expo Pavilion Days 14
It's History 20
A Look Back at the Shanghai Expo
Endangered Art 26
Traditional Comedy Redux 30

People

Above and Beyond 32
Changing the Face of Beijing's English Signs

Culture

A Prayer for Peace 36
My Cup of Tea 38

Society

Into Thin Air 42
2010 China International Air Sports Fiesta
Walking on Water 46
Hainan's Sea People

Explore

A Blast from the Past 50
A Foreigner's Visit to Ancient Wuzhen Town
Swan Lake 54
Vistas of Valleys, Villages and Caverns 58
Pictures in the Sand 62
Resting in Peace 68
Serene Age-Old Qingyan Town

Exhibit

Artistic Responsibility 72

Asian Games

Evolving Villages 76
Info 80

Front Cover:
World Expo Shanghai attracted more than 70 million visitors, a record number in the history of the global event. ***by Wan Quan***

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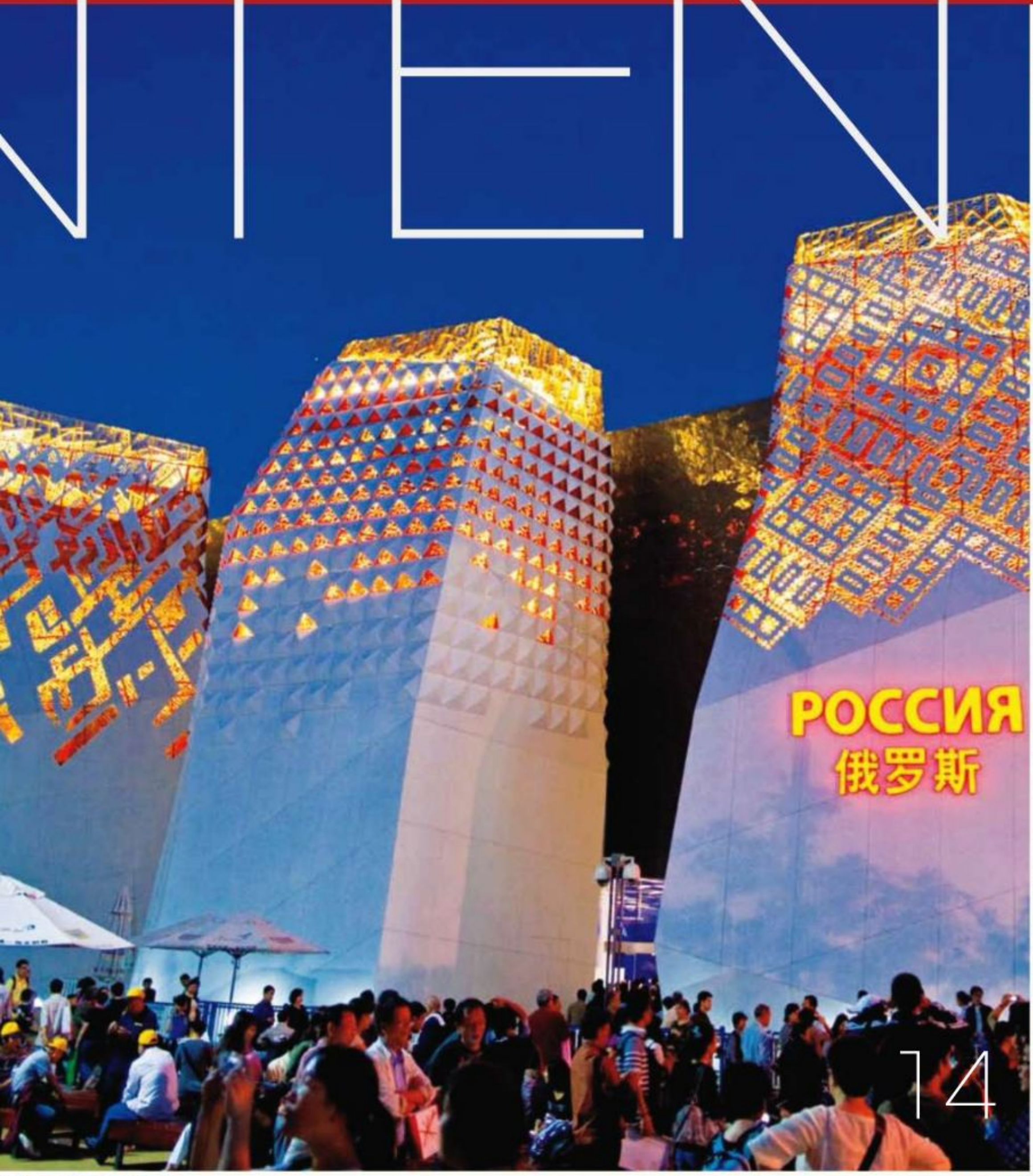


14

62

38

50

54

68

72

CHINAPICTORIAL

Travel Destination of the Month

Beijing
Lijiang
Kunming

Lijiang Impression

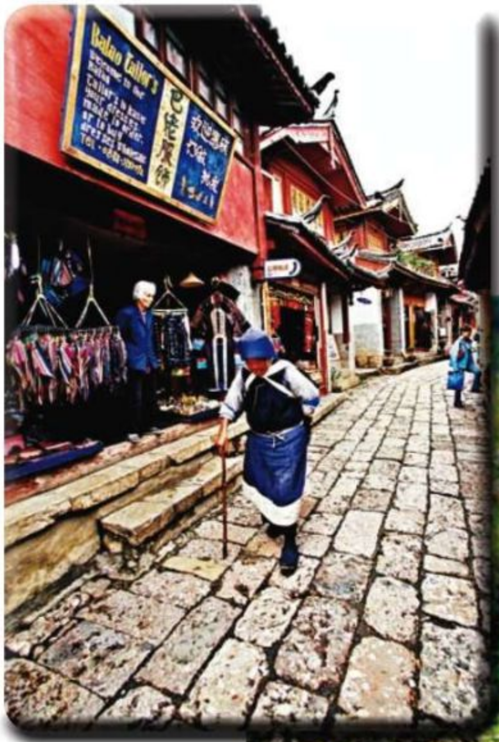
For some places, November is a good time for traveling. Removed from the crowds and rush of the seven-day National Day holiday in early October, traveling in China in November costs less and provides a better situation all around, from accommodations to service. Some destinations are just better to visit during the conventional off-season, and Lijiang is certainly one example.

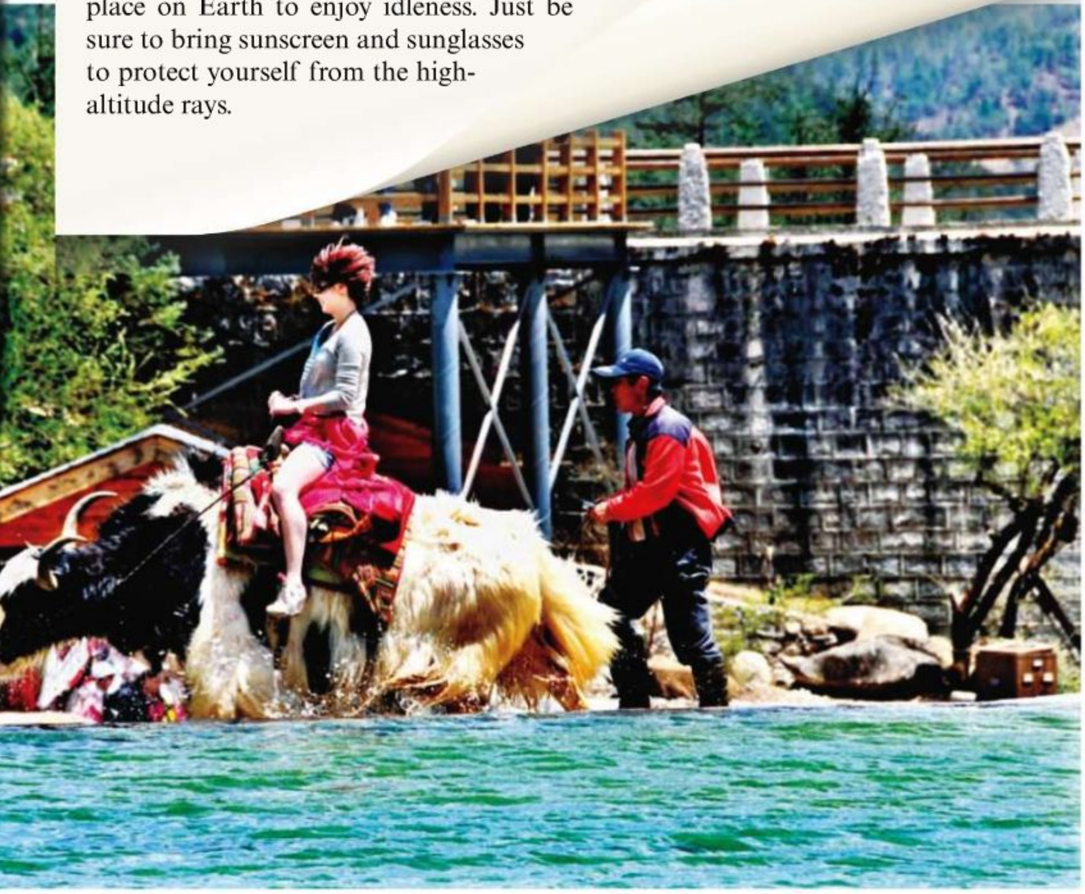
Like many of China's ancient cities, the name Lijiang can refer to two different locales. It can mean Lijiang City, located where the Yunnan-Guizhou and Qinghai-Tibet Plateaus meet in northwestern Yunnan Province, or it can refer to Lijiang Ancient Town, situated inside of Lijiang City. The area has been known for cultural diversity since ancient times because it has been home to a variety of ethnic groups. Once travelers reach Lijiang, it can also serve as a great starting point for adventures to surrounding attractions such as Yulong and Meili Snow Mountains, Lugu Lake, Qiangui Mountain, and even Shangri-La.

A visit to Lijiang will vary depending on the season. In November (a low-water period), many tourists skip the magnificent Tiger Leaping Gorge, but the month is optimum to see nearby Meili Snow Mountain. Summer months of June and July are best to visit Lugu Lake because after the rainy season, roadways to the lake become rather inconvenient. In spring and summer, flowers bloom and grass turns a radiant green in Lijiang, whereas fall and winter bring stunning scenes of migrating birds. It's nearly impossible to witness all of Lijiang's beauty without an extended stay.

Independent traveling is highly recommended in Lijiang, rather than joining a tour group. Rushing from one attraction to the next isn't the best way to take it all in, and Lijiang is nicknamed the most suitable place on Earth to enjoy idleness. Just be sure to bring sunscreen and sunglasses to protect yourself from the high-altitude rays.

Ancient Lijiang Town. CFP





With Lijiang as a starting point, there are many nearby places worth exploring. IC

Off-Season Arrival

The conclusion of the National Day holiday week marks the beginning of Beijing's tourist off-season. According to figures from local travel agencies, prices of both inbound and outbound tourism services already reached low off-season rates.

But mid-range hotels have been hurting for nearly two months. They traditionally target business travelers and foreign tourists, whose numbers from September to October were far below projections because a recent surge of the Chinese Yuan against the Euro caused many European travel groups to cancel trips.

2 Million Travelers

If current trends continue, in 2015, over 2 million Chinese tourists will visit the United States and 3 million U.S. tourists will visit China. A chief Chinese tourism official estimated these numbers provided that the momentum of outbound tourism growth continues.

The optimistic forecast by the National Tourism Administration came during a dialogue about tourism cooperation between government departments, tourism travel services, hotels and airlines from both countries.

West Lake Expo

The West Lake International Expo in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, was held from October 16 to November 6 to attract tourism and boost the local economy.

After the area's first expo in 1929, it has evolved into Hangzhou's platform to develop its service industry and build a quality city.

Daily Moscow-Guangzhou Flights

China Southern Airlines announced it would soon offer daily flights between Moscow and Guangzhou.

Previously, Southern Airlines operated four Moscow flights a week, and Russian passengers primarily used this route to connect with domestic Chinese flights to Hainan resorts.

NY Knicks Partnership

The Beijing Tourism Administration recently announced a marketing partnership with the New York Knicks for the 2010-11 NBA season.

The multi-platform partnership includes branding opportunities, hospitality, a sweepstakes, and experiential marketing opportunities at Madison Square Garden and on NYKnicks.com.

Lucky Ten

On October 10, tens of thousands of couples flooded registry offices across the Chinese Mainland in a rush to tie the knot on a once-in-a-century lucky date. Regardless of numerology opinions, October 10, 2010 was undoubtedly a bumper day for the wedding industry in China's big cities.

On the triple-ten day, young couples were already lined up in the early morning to guarantee a chance to get a wedding license. Registration officials claim there is a growing trend for couples to marry on supposedly auspicious days, particularly dates where all the numbers match.

A marriage registration office packed with people on October 10, Binzhou City, Shandong Province. IC

结婚证
中华人民共和国

Novak Djokovic of Serbia poses with the trophy after winning men's singles final. IC

China Open Champions

Novak Djokovic of Serbia and Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, the top-seeds of men's and women's singles, both emerged victorious in the China Open finals on October 11 in Beijing.

Reigning champion Novak Djokovic beat Spanish eighth seed David Ferrer 6-2, 6-4 in the rain-delayed final match to successfully defend his title.

Later, in the women's singles final, Wozniacki, the world's top ranked female, took the title by beating Russia's Vera Zvonareva 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

国家体育总局
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Kang Chenchen holds the torch during the lighting ceremony. IC

Asian Games Flame

The 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games flame was sparked with a traditional sun-ray ceremony at the Juyongguan pass of the Great Wall on October 9.

The sun shone just enough over the ancient military stronghold for Kang Chenchen, a 22-year-old student from Yunnan Arts University, to focus its rays on the silver torch using a concave mirror.

The flame will burn during the Nov. 12-27 Guangzhou Asian Games, after a month-long torch relay through Beijing, Harbin, Changchun, Haiyang and 21 cities in Guangdong Province.

A Fresh Closing High

Chinese shares continued their upward trend on October 11 and regained the 2,800-point level as daily turnover hit its highest mark this year.

The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rose 2.49 percent to close at 2,806.94. The Shenzhen Component Index gained 2.74 percent to end at 12,237.65.

Combined turnover surged to 425.58 billion yuan from 283.42 billion yuan the previous trading day.

An expectant trader at a stock market in Wuhan City. CFP

Flugtag Air Show

Thousands of people braved wind and rain to watch the Asia debut of the Flugtag air show in Hong Kong.

More than 40 teams from around the world took part in the event at Victoria Harbor on October 10. Participants took off from a six-meter-high platform in self-made aircraft before flying across the harbor and plunging into the water.

Most competitors dressed in outlandish costumes for the occasion. Flugtag has been held in 35 cities around the world since it was started by Red Bull in 1971.

A competitor plunges from a runway into the water of Victoria Harbor. IC

Meeting in Nanjing

On October 10, Nanjing hosted "Beautiful City, Green Nanjing — Miss World Ecological Tourism Subway Promotion" event, which aimed to promote Nanjing and green travel. The event was held at the city's Drum Tower Square and marked the opening of the Miss World Ecological Tourism Contest. After the event, 59 candidates from 49 nations and regions took a subway ride to promote green travel.

Candidates during the publicity campaign. IC

Chinese national flags fly outside the China Pavilion on the eve of National Day 2010. CFP

A Billion Diplomats and Counting

Text by Li Bo

As Chinese people celebrated the country's 61st National Day on October 1, 2010, a national image promotional film was broadcast by foreign media agencies such as CNN and BBC. The video showcases more than 50 of China's most prominent 21st century citizens from several different walks of life, including Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing (the wealthiest of all ethnic Chinese worldwide), Li Yanhong (CEO of Baidu.com, the world's most-used Chinese search engine), basketball star Yao Ming, and movie star Zhang Ziyi. The production is evidence of the new face of China, which can now confidently focus on a variety of aspects of its dramatic recent development in an effort to hone its international public relations.

In fact, as early as 2008 when the Olympic Games landed in Beijing, China was already addressing global public relations with a series of campaigns aiming to boost the country's image with foreign audiences, by using a combination of historical and modern faces from revered Confucius to giant Yao Ming to ordinary Chinese workers.

All these efforts are categorized as "public diplomacy," according to Zhao Qizheng, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) and former Minister of the State Council Information Office. As one of the innovators of public diplomacy in China, Zhao defines "public diplomacy" thusly: Governmental diplomacy and public diplomacy work together to form a nation's diplomacy as a whole. All parties engaged in public diplomacy focus on national conditions from a variety of angles – explaining national policies, showcasing native culture, attracting the foreign audience's interest, and clarifying misunderstandings about the nation. In the meantime, they will also try to better understand opinions of foreign citizens through international communication.

After three decades of blistering growth, China has eclipsed Japan as the world's second-biggest economy, with a GDP soaring from 364.5 billion yuan to 33.5 trillion yuan, at an impressive annual growth rate averaging 9 percent.

However, from the perspective of Wu Jinan, deputy director of the Academic Committee of the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, China's rise has not put an end to some Western negative spin related to the nation, and China's international image has not improved in the mainstream media coverage in the West, as evidenced by some reports related to the 2008 Lhasa riot in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

After the outbreak of violence on March 14, BBC published a photo on its website depicting a scene of Chinese policemen assisting medical workers to move the injured to an ambulance. However, the caption misled readers to believe that many troops were seen in Lhasa. A photo on the US-based Fox.com was accompanied by a caption alleging that Chinese servicemen were pulling protesters onto a truck, even though the image actually depicted Indian police.

"To build a national image that can be fairly judged, we should not depend on Western media," asserts Wu Jinan, "but should take initiative and do our part to depict the actual situation, eliminate misconceptions, and improve our public opinion environment through public diplomatic approaches."

Zhao Qizheng shares the same opinion. "Each year, numerous Chinese people go abroad to study, travel, and work as global citizens," he explains. "This requires Chinese nationals to shoulder the responsibility of communicating with the international community. Therefore, public diplomacy is an inevitable challenge of modern China."

Government Lead

Near the end of 2009, a 30-second television commercial, designed to enhance China's reputation as a manufacturer of quality goods, aired in the United States. In the ad, a jogger's shoes are "made in China with American sports technology," a housewife's refrigerator is "made in China with European style," an MP3 player bears a label that reads "made in China with technology from Silicon Valley," and the clothes are labeled "made in China with French designers."

With the hook, "Made in China, Made with the World," the ad was part of the image rehabilitation campaign for Chinese-made products launched by China's Ministry of Commerce. It conveys the notion that China produces fine-quality goods in cooperation with different nations.

"The participation of foreign creative firms, overseas shooting, and language easy for the target audience to absorb combine to produce a positive effect," asserted Ji Shuoming, senior journalist with *Asia Weekly*, in his positive evaluation of the PR campaign. According to him, government should play a leading role in public diplomacy, and no matter which approach is adopted, the chosen words must be understandable and expressions must cater to target audiences. "Only in this way can we earn credit from the overseas public and fair judgment in the international community," he stresses.

1.3 Billion Diplomats

Along with the growth of outbound Chinese tourism (more than 47 million Chinese people visited foreign countries in 2009), some of the travelers' behavior, such as extravagant spending, excessively loud chatting, and random spitting, have been frequently examined by foreign media. In a worldwide ranking of individual nations' international tourist image conducted by European hospitality, Chinese tourists finished third from the bottom.

In Zhao Qizheng's view, the general public lays the foundation for public diplomacy, and regardless of governmental efforts, the national image building of China largely depends on each and every citizen. Everybody is obligated to participate.

Duan Yuezhong, senior researcher at Chahar Institute and publisher of the Journal of Chinese in Japan, related a simple way that negative minds can be changed. In 2008, the Chinese government invited Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara to the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games. Previously, the politician maintained a fairly unfriendly attitude towards China and criticized the country on several occasions. After the performances, Ishihara told reporters that in his opinion the most impressive part of the ceremony was the female college students who circled the racetrack and continued dancing with radiant smiles for two hours straight. "I previously denounced China," he said, "but these youngsters are quite different from Japanese college students. From them I can see the hope of the nation. I really admire them."

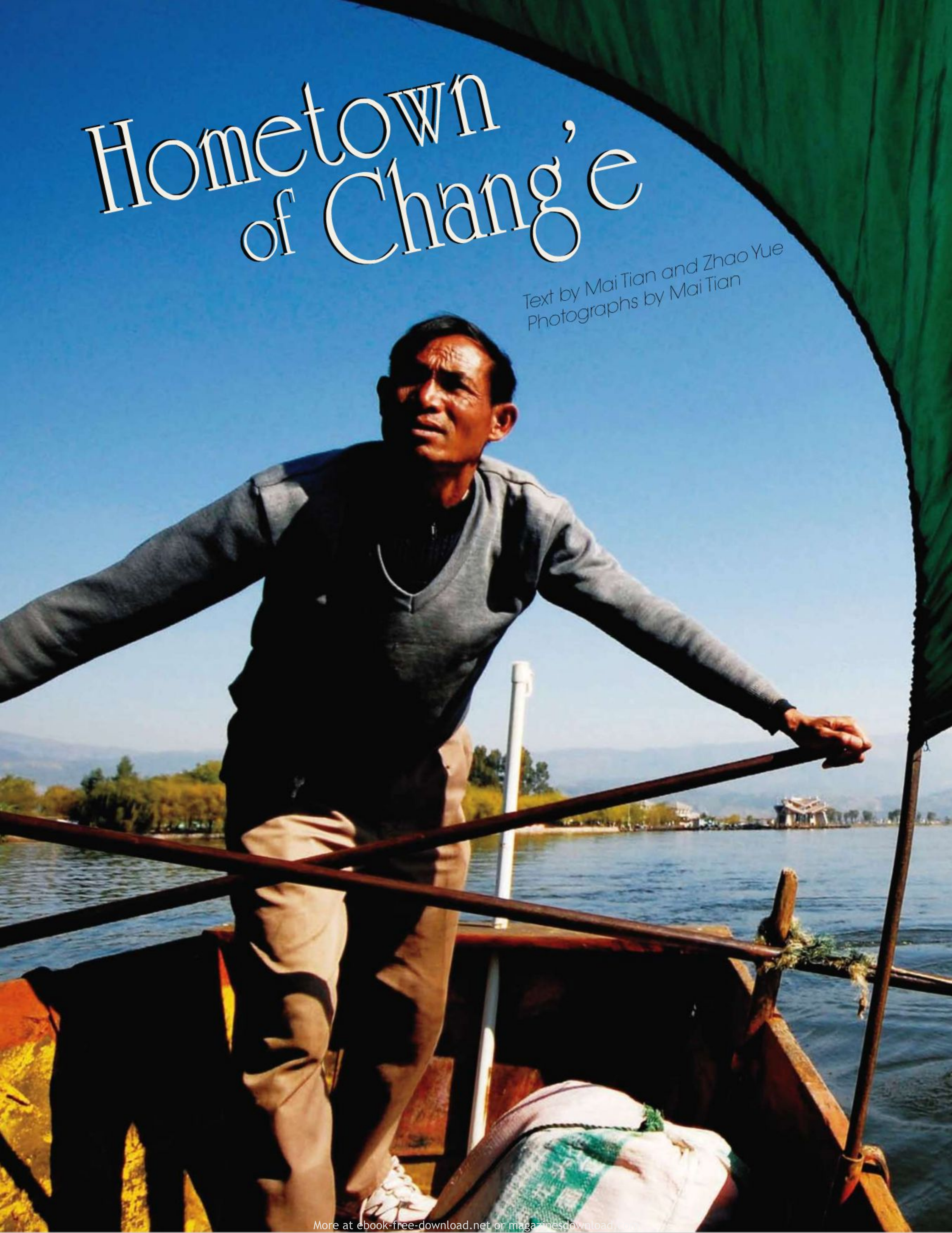
"Although those students were just volunteers," Duan Yuezhong notes, "they moved the audience with their performance, and improved China's image in the eyes of some foreigners, including at least one who had previously harbored hostility towards China."

察哈尔公共外交研讨会
上海2010
har Forum on Public Diplomacy Shanghai
传播中国国家形象

October 8, 2010: Chahar Forum on Public Diplomacy is held in Shanghai. by Wang Lei

Hometown of Chang'e

Text by Mai Tian and Zhao Yue
Photographs by Mai Tian

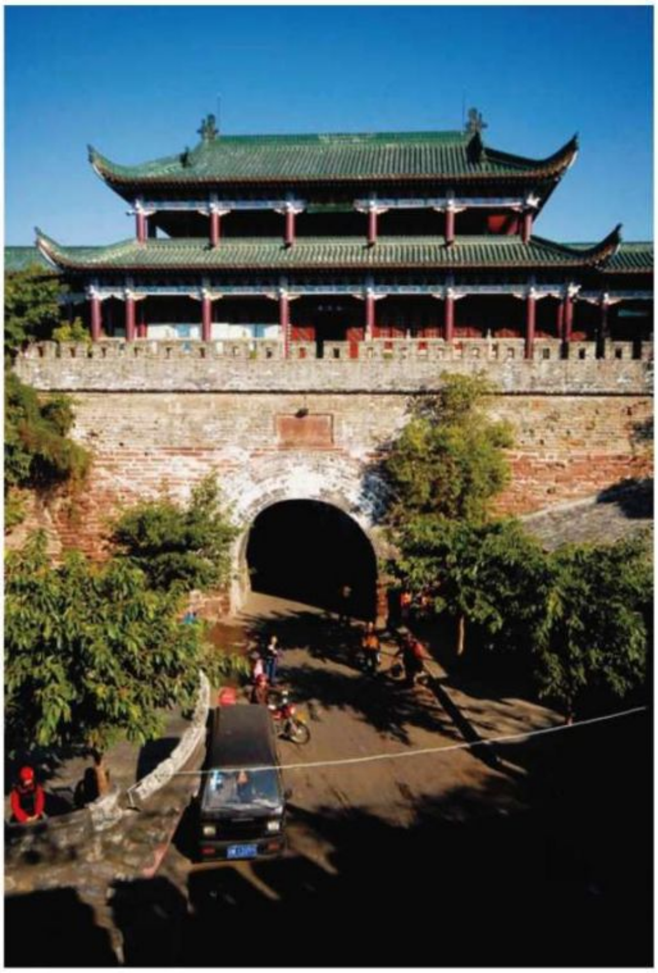


Chang'e-2 lunar probe blasts off from Xichang Satellite Launch Center. by Zou Yi

On October 1, the Chang'e-2 lunar probe blasted off from Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province, lifting the curtain on the second phase of China's moon mission. The primary objective of the unmanned lunar probe is to lay foundation for a future lunar soft-landing and further China's exploration of outer space.

Once again, the focus of the nation turned to Xichang. With so much recent attention, the city now attracts tourists from across the country. Many who made the trip to witness the satellite launch were surprised to be so enchanted with the city even after all the smoke cleared.

Helmsmen on Qionghai Lake.



Ancient city gate of Xichang.

The New Land of Abundance

Chengdu Plain has been known as a land of abundance since ancient times. In 2008, *Chinese National Geography* magazine presented a "New Land of Abundance" assessment. Along with the wide variety of nominees, many were surprised to see Xichang on the list. Although it and Chengdu are both in Sichuan Province, Xichang is geographically remote from the traditional Land of Abundance. Thus, the nomination led to some fierce debating. How could a small satellite launch city rival Chengdu, with a centuries-old reputation as a livable city?

Located in the southwest corner of Sichuan, Xichang borders Yunnan Province. At an altitude of 1,500 to 2,500 meters on Chuanxi Plateau, Xichang sits on the plateau's Anninghe Plain — the second largest plain in Sichuan. Included in its relatively small population of 650,000 are nearly 30 ethnic groups, including Han, Yi, Tibetan, and Hui. Blessed with a mild climate year-round, Xichang enjoys clear, clean air. The vast majority of its days are sunny, so much so that it has been called "Sun City," one major factor in its selection as a satellite launch base.

However, locals attribute the city's overwhelming livability primarily to Qionghai Lake, a beautiful body of water within the town.

Qionghai Lake

To most who live there, Qionghai Lake is the pride of Xichang. The 30-square-kilometer lake is the second largest freshwater lake in the province. Like most plateau lakes, Qionghai boasts picturesque scenery and contrasting vistas during every season. In spring, willows sprout and peaches blossom as birds hover over the glassy water. Summer is the high-water period, so lush grass springs up across a nearby wetland, and trees shade nearby hills. The invigorating autumn brings cool breezes and fresh air, and in winter, the pristine water mirrors surrounding maple trees and cypresses. When the afternoon brings stiffer winds, visitors see the normally tranquil lake turn wild. The famous Italian traveler Marco Polo even made a visit to Qionghai Lake and was amazed by its beauty enough to record the experience in his widely-read *The Travels of Marco Polo*.

As a scenic spot, Qionghai has lived up to its reputation. But for locals, Qionghai is more than just a pretty attraction. It has become an integral part of daily life.

When *Chinese National Geography* was conducting its "New Land of Abundance" project, it mentioned the happy aura — a key criterion for a good city. What factors in city life actually bring happiness to its residents? This question has been widely pondered by both public and city officials. Residents' well-being is the fundamental purpose for a city's economic development.

Xichang is not a highly developed city in terms of economy. However, it seems that people there are always smiling. An ordinary local resident's life is free from over-time work and traffic jams. They buy their groceries on their way home from work and have time to cook a decent dinner for the whole family. On weekends, either with family or with friends, they relax by Qionghai Lake, bathing under the sun or simply having a chat. They may patronize a nearby restaurant for fresh fish from the lake. With less pressure, low cost of living, and a high-quality environment, Xichang has many living advantages over the larger metropolises.

Ancient Xichang City

In the northeast of the city proper, 2,400 meters of the north and west walls still stand, reminding that they once guarded the 13-hectare ancient Xichang City. The brick walls originally featured four gates. The gates were all built from 1368-1398, and three have survived the centuries to remain today.

The ancient city was constructed next to Qionghai Lake. The city walls connected to Datong, once the largest gate, which disappeared long ago. However, according to some place names, tourists still get a sense of the city's past. Sipailou district is the nostalgic core of the ancient city. Antiquated shops, ethnic costume shops and restaurants are common in the area.

On most days of the year, visitors will find out why Xichang is called "Sun City." Locals recommend resting on a deck chair to take your time enjoying a cup of tea and the sunshine.

Xichang Mountains

Xichang is naturally warm with pleasant weather because of the surrounding mountains which shield the plain, but this ideal geography also helps to provide residents with rich products. Without the mountains, Xichang residents couldn't so easily lead such a happy life.

Lushan, near Qionghai Lake, is the first mountain most tourists will see after their arrival in Xichang. With an altitude of 2,300 meters, the mountain somewhat resembles a frog. Some have called the mountain a warrior guarding the lake.

Zigzagging paths lead tourists to the foot of the mountain, and pines and cypresses along pathways guide them to the top. On the mountainside, more than 10 temples from a variety of historical eras can be found. Interestingly, the temples are devoted to different faiths, including Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, but have peacefully remained together on the same mountain for hundreds of years without conflict.

Another of the area's delightful resorts, Luoji Mountain, lies 30 kilometers away from Xichang City. Big enough to cross the two counties of Dechang and Puge as well as the city of Xichang, the main peak of the mountain is about 4,400 meters high.

Qionghai Lake in the late autumn.

Azaleas are a must see on Luoji. They grow amongst the firs in 30 varieties only at an altitude of 3,100 to 4,100 meters. The area's mild weather allows the flower season to last from April into late autumn, giving travelers a wide window to visit.

With such great mountains, lakes, and personality, how could anyone argue against dubbing Xichang a land of abundance?

Locals generally maintain easygoing attitudes.

EXPO PAVILION DAYS

Text by Deng Jie

Representatives from 240 countries and regions made the trip to Shanghai for the six-month 2010 Shanghai World Expo. With countless exhibitions, both domestic and foreign, familiar and exotic, much of the grand gathering's allure was showcased on respective national pavilion days highlighting cultures that are a world apart.

The Spain Pavilion at night. by Fan Jing

Austrian Prime Minister Werner Faymann shows off his ping-pong skill on Austria's Pavilion Day. CFP

On Spain's Pavilion Day, the trophy for the 2010 FIFA World Cup attracted great attention. CFP

Europe

Europe developed a brilliant and profound culture during its long history, which can be showcased in performances of singing, dancing, and opera.

Famous Finnish children's play, *Moominpappa at Sea*, adapted from Tove Jansson's book of the same name, was staged at the Expo. For other performances, Finnish musicians played along with their Chinese peers, accompanying the Finnish National Ballet with a juxtaposition of instruments such as both the accordion and *pipa* (Chinese lute).

Austria's Vienna has been considered the global music capital for centuries, and its fruits have been enjoyed by the furthest corners of the planet. Four musicians from the Vienna Philharmonic joined hands with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and Jin Xing Dance Theatre Shanghai to entertain audiences at the Expo Center. The Austria Pavilion was lucky enough to have a Chinese image ambassador, Sun Xiang, a football star who once played for an Austrian Team. Sports events there featured a table tennis match between him and Werner Schlager, a famous Austrian ping-pong player.

Spain is world-renowned for bullfighting and as the latest champion of the FIFA World Cup. The Spanish Pavilion quickly became a favorite of visitors to the Shanghai World Expo after appearances by Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and NBA star Pau Gasol. Those who attended Spanish Pavilion Day were deeply impressed by performances by Spanish artists, including some ballet and a guitar concert by Jose Maria Gallardo Del Rey.

Finland's Pavilion Day was filled with fairytale flavors. by Fang Shuo

On Japan's Pavilion Day, an old-fashioned Japanese boat sailed the Huangpu River. ***CFP***

Asia

Japan's Pavilion Day featured the theme "Looking into the Future." ***CFP***

Japan's Pavilion Day showcased its traditional culture with a highlight on cultural exchanges between China and Japan since ancient times. During the day, Japanese artists walked their giant green dragon through the Expo area. As night fell, a big performance lit up the stage, as Chinese and Japanese artists joined to present the best of their traditional and modern culture through a wide variety of forms, including magic and opera.

During Singapore Pavilion Day, Singapore culture was vibrantly displayed in the form of a "symphony" – dancing with the accompaniment of various musical instruments, such as drums, gongs, and horns. The costumes were a mixture of traditional flavors from Malaysia, India, and China, a perfect melding of the island's diverse cultures.

中国
EXPO
EXPO
AI CHINA

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attends his country's Pavilion Day. ***CFP***

University of Southern California students on American Pavilion Day. CFP

America

July 1 is Canada's national holiday, so it was chosen for the country's Pavilion Day, which also marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Sino-Canadian diplomatic relations. Michaëlla Jean, Canada's governor general, participated in the celebration, which included performances by Cirque Du Soleil, Grand Dérangement, Jets Overhead, and a Native American dancing group from the northwestern coast of British Columbia.

Mexico's Pavilion Day fell on September 16, 2010 – the 200th anniversary of the country's independence from Spain and the 100th anniversary of the most recent Mexican revolution. During the celebration, Mexican artists danced in a variety of styles, both ancient and modern, and performed to showcase traditional Mexican culture from different parts of the country.

At the ceremony of the American Pavilion Day, famous American soprano Angela M. Brown sang her national anthem a cappella. A grand parade consisting of the USC (University of Southern California) marching band, clowns on stilts, and modern dance on floats created a visual feast for visitors. The day was also highlighted by the appearances of current Miss America, Rima Fakih, and NBA star Derek Fisher, who served as a volunteer commentator at the Expo.

Africa

The African pavilions displayed aspects of the continent's promising future.

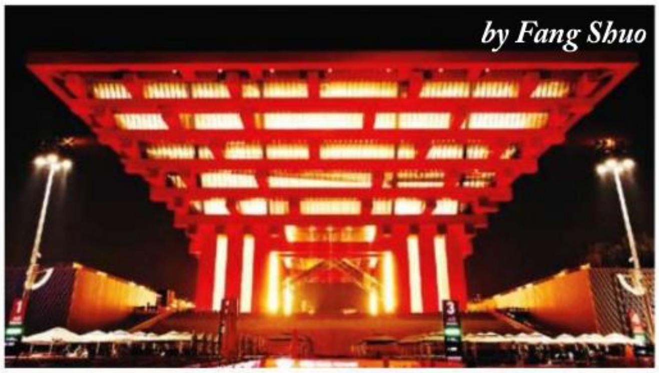
Rwanda's Pavilion Day was highlighted by a dance performance themed "Rwanda, A Land of Peace and Prosperity." The traditional dancing depicted diligent women and the harmonious relationship between man, animals, and nature.

South Africa took great pride in hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Its Pavilion Day fell on August 9, which is also its Women's Day. At the ceremony, a number of the country's most outstanding women artists demonstrated their talent through singing and dancing. On that day in 1956, over 20,000 women demonstrated on the streets in Pretoria, protesting racial segregation laws. Since then, the day has been memorializing South African women's remarkable contributions to modern society and the great achievements in advancing equal rights and interests. It also serves as a reminder to the world that even today women still face difficulties and prejudice.

China

China's Pavilion Day was scheduled for October 1, to coincide with its National Day. The celebrations were divided into two parts: the official ceremony and an evening party. A large screen displayed two short films: One documented the construction of the China Pavilion, and the other featured interviews with 12 ordinary people from different parts of the country who visited the China Pavilion. At the Art Festival, a special service was provided to paint visitors' faces with patterns such as the five-star national flag, the logos of the Expo, or the China Pavilion.

The evening party entertained audiences with a variety of forms, such as Peking Opera, and singing and dancing in the styles of several ethnic minorities.



by Fang Shuo

October 1 is China's National Day and was chosen for her Pavilion Day. CFP

IT'S HISTORY

A LOOK BACK AT THE SHANGHAI EXPO

Text by Zhao Fei

The Russia Pavilion attracted throngs of visitors. by Wan Quan

When the curtain was raised on World Expo Shanghai on May 1, 2010, it inaugurated a monumental event that would last 184 days and attract 70 million visitors to take in what the 246 participating countries and organizations had to offer. The fair served not only as a window for China to show itself to the world, but also an unprecedented opportunity for the nation to absorb the rest of the world's latest scientific and cultural developments. The benefits of hosting the World Expo are not easily quantified, but it's worth examining how the face of modern China may be changed.

A train on the Shanghai-Nanjing High-Speed Railway, which began operation during the Shanghai Expo. CFP

Expo Tourism

The duration of the Shanghai Expo was considerably longer than the 2008 Beijing Olympics, which enabled the fair to play an ever bigger role in fanning the flames of China's already-growing tourism industry. It's no surprise that the National Tourism Administration of China declared 2010 "World Expo Tourism Year." Even before the games began, Expo tourism fever was sweeping across China. As early as April, an Expo Tourism Promotion Week was simultaneously presented in 100 Chinese cities. Additionally, nearly 200 recommended travel routes were identified and promoted.

The Shanghai Expo's commencement marked the beginning of a new era for the city and its surrounding neighbors. Statistics showed that most hotels in Shanghai upped their rates by at least 15 percent for the duration of the event. According to 17u.cn, an online Chinese travel agency, 20 percent of hotels surrounding the Expo Site were overbooked by May, enjoying a heavy increase in business compared to previous years. It is estimated that of the Expo's 70 million visitors, only 30 percent were local residents, so nearly 50 million traveled from outside of Shanghai. Other estimates claim that Expo visitors injected about 111.7 billion yuan into the city's economy, including over a billion yuan on food alone.

The opportunities for benefits certainly weren't limited to Shanghai, and its neighboring cities found chances to strengthen their economies and showcase their respective charms to the world. For example, the ancient town of Zhouzhuang (considered China's top "water town") in Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province, developed a travel program called "Pavilion Outside the Expo Site" to convince foreign Expo visitors to make the trip away from Shanghai, and the town dispatched delegations to places such as Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, amongst others, to promote the program. Jiangsu Province also presented 55 World Expo-related travel routes for tourists. In Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, the municipal government had already taken measures to preserve its status as a wet and beautiful city through comprehensive conservation of West Lake, Xixi Wetland, its arm of the Grand Canal, and Qiantang River.

Expo Economy

Shanghai is located in the Yangtze River Delta, China's fastest-growing and most vibrant region. Even before its commencement, the 2010 World Expo already generated considerable momentum for the region's economic development. According to Wan Jifei, deputy director of the Shanghai World Expo Organizing Committee and chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the exhibition industry may stimulate development in associated industries by a ratio at 1:9. During the preparatory period, the Expo encouraged investments across the entire Yangtze River Delta to grow by 30 percent each year, and the figure is expected to reach as high as 50 percent in 2010.

During preparations for the Expo, a tremendous sum was invested directly to build pavilions and other structures at the Expo Site, and even more investments were made to improve the infrastructure of Shanghai and its neighboring regions. A major project of the Shanghai Expo, the S32 Expressway linking Shanghai Pudong International Airport to Zhejiang Province's Jiaxing, Huzhou and Hangzhou began operation, increasing Shanghai's west-bound travel arteries to six. Additionally, the Shanghai-Nanjing Intercity Railway, with a designed velocity of 350 kph, began running, as well as the Shanghai-Hangzhou High-Speed Railway and the Hongqiao Station of the Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway, which were all completed during the Shanghai Expo.

Such a grand event with a global reach meant enormous business opportunities for both Chinese and foreign companies. Relying on their acute marketing instinct, businessmen from Zhejiang and Jiangsu won contracts to manufacture officially-licensed Expo products, a deal valued at several billion yuan. The Expo also offered an ideal platform for China's

Last century's furniture displayed in the China Pavilion evoked nostalgia in some visitors. by Fan Jing

The greenery and exotic plants in the New Zealand Pavilion represented the aura of the country's breathtaking vistas. by Fang Shuo

October 17, 2010: Tourists queue up at the main entrance to the Expo Site. CFP

The London Case Pavilion in the Shanghai Expo's Urban Best Practices Area showcased zero carbon emissions. by Fan Jing

domestic brands to promote themselves to previously untapped foreign markets, hoping to boost international economic cooperation.

Better City, Better Life

The theme of Expo 2010 was "Better City, Better Life." Many new ideas were shared related to building sustainable, eco-friendly cities and conserving old urban districts, not to mention the world's latest technology related to architecture, building materials, new energy and urban transportation, which may help China and her fellow global citizens in upgrading urban construction.

In fact, the organizers of Shanghai Expo planned on hosting an ecological, green, and environmentally friendly Expo since the very beginning, so they adopted a series of measures to reduce carbon emission as much as possible. For instance, the site of the Expo was originally a heavily-polluted district of Shanghai. After the locale was chosen for the Expo Site, local iron and steel factories were moved to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions and improve the local ecosystem. Priority was given to ecological and low-carbon concepts in the planning phase of the Expo Site, which gave favor to ideas such as the pedestrian walkway design, energy conservation techniques, eco-friendliness, and sustainable utilization. The Expo's experimental structures are fancy and creative, including the fairytale Russia Pavilion, the Italy Pavilion made of sticks, and wicker-basket Spain Pavilion. But they are more than just avant-garde designs – more importantly, they all demonstrate new ecological innovation.

According to Wu Zhiqiang, chief designer of the Expo Site, experimental buildings will definitely generate a far-reaching, positive impact on future civil architecture in Chinese cities. "The world is undergoing a revolution in terms of new energy, new industry, and new lifestyles," he commented. "However, China's urban construction is suffering from many bottlenecks related to environmental protection and sustainable development. Concepts related to energy conservation, environmental protection, and low carbon that came with the Shanghai Expo will leave their marks on the nation's future urban construction and lifestyle improvement."

More Civilized Lifestyle

This is the first time China hosted the World Expo, which offered a never-before-seen chance for the nation to learn advanced concepts from the outside world.

After the commencement of the Shanghai Expo, the uncivilized behavior of some attendees aroused criticism from local newspapers. *Jiefang Daily* reported that some visitors pretended to be ill or disabled so that they could have priority with taxis, and *Xinmin Evening News* also ran stories about bad behavior amongst visitors. Such news evoked fierce criticism from both printed and online media. On many occasions, both government and nongovernmental organizations asked Chinese visitors to demonstrate their best behavior at the Expo Site.

With the passage of time, such embarrassment is abating. In 2003, Wu Jianmin, honorary president of the International Bureau of Exhibitions (BIE), invited foreign guests to participate in the World Expo Forum in Shanghai. At the time, participants staying in Jin Jiang Hotel needed to walk across a public street to attend meetings in Okura Garden Hotel. Every time they crossed the street, then BIE President Gilles Noghes and Honorary President Ole Philipson held Wu's arms tightly. They were afraid of being hit by passing cars, which seemed to totally neglect the existence of pedestrians. "They once complained to me that it took great courage for a pedestrian to cross a Chinese street," Wu recalled. However, when he visited the Expo Site recently, Wu delightfully noticed that drivers began to yield to pedestrians in streets. "This is a remarkable progress," he commented.

South Weekend, a prestigious nationwide newspaper

in China, remarked, "When the world brings the latest achievements of human civilization to China, it never expects to encounter the uncivilized behavior of some Chinese people, such as making loud noise in public, cutting in lines, and littering. As a whole, Chinese people are already able to organize a grand international event, but perhaps each individual has to learn how to behave gracefully at it. For China, the Expo is not only a window to display the world its prosperity, but a chance to learn dominant public norms of the planet."

Better Global Image

Amongst the 70 million visitors to the World Expo were scores of politicians, entrepreneurs, scientists, and artists from around the world. It was a rare opportunity for Shanghai to become so well-known by world citizens, while allowing the world to deeper understand the enormous changes taking place in China. It also helped promote China's global image.

The Shanghai Expo offered a platform for Chinese culture to develop its attractiveness by joining with complementary foreign ideas. A new icon of China, the China Pavilion displayed the essence of Chinese culture. Additionally, a number of cultural activities organized by China in the Expo Site also exhibited the charm of Chinese culture.

At the Shanghai Expo, all national pavilions and the exhibitions inside were iconic embodiments of their own history and culture. The 20,000 artistic performances during the event each featured distinctive cultural characteristics of their respective countries. Through exchanging architecture, music, opera, dance, and art, Chinese civilization and other civilizations from around the world collided with each other in hopes of thriving together. During the process, Chinese culture was enriched.

The Shanghai Expo provided a good opportunity for China to spread its cultural influence. What the Expo brought to China is not only a short-term boom of investment and consumption, but an ideal platform to display its reform and opening-up achievements and spread its core values. Taking advantage of the open, multicultural platform, China has enabled cross-cultural exchange with the world like never before, absorbed some of the latest results of human civilization, and injected a new vitality into its future reform and development.

Relaxing at the Bund, a historic scenic riverfront area in Shanghai. by Fan Jing

Faded scripts and simple props.

Endangered Art

Text and photographs by Jin Ke

Carefully applying make-up.

Several cups, a pair of chopsticks, and a dish – this is all that Xu Chunhua, one of a handful of remaining professional *baiju* performers, needs to present her art. *Baiju*, reputed to be "the most representative folk opera of Nanjing," can be traced back over 600 years. A typical performance involves five characters or less and is presented in Nanjing dialect. Lyrics are easily understood by local audiences, and they're usually humorous with strong Nanjing flavor.

Historians believe that *baiju* evolved from ballads composed by silk spinners during their work. Manually spinning silk was an incredibly boring task. To help the hours pass more easily, spinners started chanting ballads inspired by political affairs and daily life. Later, some of them began performing free for their neighbors. In fact, the name of the art form is derived from the fact that it was originally free, and *baiju* is translated as "free performance."

In 1960, the Nanjing *Baiju* Troupe was founded. A dozen teenagers, including a girl named Xu Chunhua, were enrolled in the group. Each day they rose before dawn to begin their strict training. Despite long hours of exhausting exercises during the day, the youngsters looked forward to evenings when the troupe president would take them to performances of a variety of art forms including Peking, *Yue*, and *Kunqu* operas. For the young artists, the performances were more than sensual feasts – they were sources of inspiration.

During the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976), the troupe was dismantled. In 1985, Xu gathered the former members and recruited *baiju* amateurs to found a new private folk troupe. Now, only five professional *baiju* performers, including Xu, remain.

I met Xu for the first time at Shizilou, a noted restaurant in downtown Nanjing. That night, she was invited to give a performance there. With the increase of diners, the restaurant soon became crowded. Under the bright lights, patrons chatted over the restaurant's delicious food and drinks, their laughter resounding through the air. Despite her gorgeous theatrical costume, Xu was hardly out-of-place in the bustling scene.

"Do you like performing in such a noisy place?" I asked in her small, dim backstage dressing room. "Any time I can sing *baiju* and more people can enjoy it," she replied with a grin. She keeps busy performing Monday through Friday at Zhuangyuanlou, another restaurant in Nanjing, and appears at Shizilou on weekends. Every day, she leaves home at 4:30 p.m. to trek to one of the two places, and doesn't return until 10 p.m. Following the tradition of performing for free, Xu refused to receive any compensation at first. But after witnessing her tireless devotion despite her age, the restaurants insisted on paying her.

The night I met her, the performance began when the stage was lit. Most diners were already consumed by conversations and food, and Xu's performance drew attention only from a couple of older customers. In the shimmering lights, her singing seemed obscure, like a voice from the remote past.

The next day, I visited her home at an ordinary apart-

Xu Chunhua in performance.

Xu Chunhua performs enthusiastically.

ment building near Biaoying Road, Baixia District. Her apartment looked small and a bit old, but neat. An outdated radio, her reading glasses on the desk, and old photos on the wall added to the nostalgic aura of the room.

When I arrived, Xu was writing at her desk between stacks of printed material related to *baiju*, including newsletters, scripts, and intangible heritage application documents. After I entered, she motioned me to the desk. "I'm writing new *baiju* scripts," she explained. I was surprised to learn that the 2014 Youth Olympic Games to be held in Nanjing was the subject of one of her new compositions. "From the very beginning, *baiju* focused on current affairs," she reminded me.

Then, Xu showed me the instruments that she uses to perform. The ordinary white cups, chopsticks and dishes were clearly treasured in a carefully-wrapped box. With these simple instruments, Xu produced rhythmic and melodic music that reverberated through the small room. Her husband, He Pei, wandered in from the other room to admire the performance. Not surprisingly, he is also a *baiju* lover. In his youth, he quit his job at a film studio to join Xu's troupe. Later, a vocal injury ruined his ability to sing *baiju* onstage, but his passion for watching his wife never abated. Over the years, he has ardently supported his wife's endeavors to save the traditional art form from extinction.

"I'm the child of Nanjing, and the beautiful land is my home…" The singing students at Kaopeng Primary School echoed through the hallways as I entered the classroom where Xu teaches folk art. Every student was engrossed in her lecture, their eyes twinkling with admiration of folk music. "Who wants to perform *baiju* in class?" Xu asked, and every child raised a hand. After class, I asked the kids, "Do you really like *baiju*?" One replied sincerely, "Of course, I think *baiju* is beautiful." Another added, "I want to learn it next term."

"It is hard to find an ideal inheritor of *baiju*," Xu sighed. "Previously, I accepted an apprentice who was in her 60s. As for these children, they're willing to sing it now, but who knows whether they will practice the art in future."

"I plan to hold a *baiju* concert next September," she added with a joyful light in her eyes. "I will invite my old colleagues to join me. Days ago, an old colleague in Henan Province called me, saying that he wanted to perform at the concert. My students in the primary school will also join us. But, we have lost many performers and playwrights from my former troupe who have already passed away."

Immediately after her lecture at Kaopeng Primary School, Xu rushed out to get to Shizilou for her nightly performance. As she threw open the school door, she remarked, "As long as I'm performing *baiju*, I'm immune to fatigue."

Xu Chunhua performs in Shizilou, a renowned restaurant in Nanjing.

TRADITIONAL COMEDY REDUX

Text by Yang Rui
Photographs by Chen Jian

The Little Match Girl *is one of Hongchun She's most popular* **xiangsheng** *plays.*

"*The Little Match Girl* is one of our most popular *xiangsheng* [comic dialogue] plays," smiles Zheng Xuetao, without hiding his affection for the comedy he adores like his child. Adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's short story, this Chinese version is infused with many indigenous elements. The adaptation depicts an allegorical and even absurd story. The little match girl meets several people, including an ill-disposed hooligan, a deceitful talent scout, and a roadside con artist, but the unexpected series of events eventually enlighten her with life truisms.

A traditional performance art of China, *xiangsheng* usually entertains the audience with humorous dialogue delivered in an exaggerated manner. Originating from Beijing, the traditional art form quickly found popularity amongst residents in many areas. However, its demand has waned in recent years. New original genre plays are infrequent, and increasingly raunchy comedy has been growing in popularity, with an inverse effect on social morality. "We are trying to show the audience really witty comic dialogue," Zheng remarks, explaining his intent to establish Hongchun She, a nongovernmental performance troupe.

In 2007, a group of *xiangsheng* amateurs, who were unsatisfied with the traditional art's development in China, decided to establish a troupe to express their own views through performance. Most of them already had a wealth of performing experience. Besides traditional art forms like *xiangsheng*, *kuaiban* (quicker tempo), *shuanghuang* (two-man comic show), singing with drums, and storytelling, the troupe also performs dramas and multimedia plays. According to Zheng, many performers work part-time at Hongchun She, while keeping full-time employment as lawyers, emcees or anchormen. For instance, Zheng himself acts as the producer of a television show of CCTV. "For most members of our troupe, performing *xiangsheng* is just a hobby, but not a way to make a living," he reveals. "For this reason, they don't worry about making money and can devote more energy to creating quality plays."

Zheng insists that he loves *xiangsheng* from the bottom of his heart. "Like me, many performers in our troupe can't hide their passion when onstage," he explains. "I speak with a strong Beijing dialect, so I focus on performing Beijing-style *xiangsheng*. I learned from Liu Hongyi, a noted *xiangsheng* master. Earlier, I had few chances to perform onstage, so I came up with the idea to establish my own *xiangsheng* troupe. This was how Hongchun She started."

"Most of our members are well-educated, and our values motivate us to refrain from performing rude material," he adds. "It can be challenging to entertain the audience without any vulgarity. However, succeeding makes it that much more rewarding."

Zheng attributes his success to instruction from his teacher, Liu Hongyi. "He is strict," he notes. "Dirty jokes are never allowed in our performances. Of course, we also perform traditional material, but we often inject some new elements and jokes. Many performers in our troupe have written plays. Only original productions can attract bigger audiences. However, it's increasingly difficult to write comedy without vulgar jokes. I'm working on a *xiangsheng* play about ancient Chinese language, which has already consumed a considerable amount of time, but it's still not finished. Also, our troupe incorporates other art forms into traditional *xiangsheng*. For instance, our *xiangsheng* play, *The Little Match Girl*, combines the elements of both drama and *xiangsheng*, which has won a warm reception from audiences."

No pain, no gain. On August 21, 2010, despite the heavy rain, Hongchun She's performance at Guangmingge Theater still attracted an audience near 90 percent capacity. The box office staff insisted that more would have attended if the weather wasn't so bad. Some performers are well-known to patrons. When they stepped on stage, they were greeted with hearty cheering and even excited shouting of their names. This performance happened to be one actor's birthday, and a fan brought a cake as a gift. Onstage jokes caused thunderous laughter and applause. Pop songs, current affairs, and even popular internet slang were part of the content of the performance. The addition of interactive activities such as raffles between performances made the theater's atmosphere even more alluring.

Ai Wei has been a loyal Hongchun She fan since he first saw the troupe a couple of years ago. "I watch them often," he smiles. "Those like me have joined to form a fan club. We can be roughly classified into four generations according to our ages and the point when we fell in love with Hongchun She. Although we have seen some plays many times, there are always some new elements in every unique performance. So, the audience is always getting surprised and having fun. At Hongchun She, *xiangsheng* fans can sometimes perform onstage along with professional actors, which we call '*Xiangsheng* karaoke.' I performed onstage twice. Some fans publish their comments and the performance stills on their blogs, to help the troupe reach a wider audience. A private chat room was even set up for fans to communicate with each other and publicize Hongchun She and *xiangsheng*."

Despite the increasing recognition it receives from the public, Zheng admits that Hongchun She still faces many challenges, the biggest of which is the fact that the troupe lacks a permanent venue. Because the tickets are affordable, the troupe only earns a modest income from each performance. The earnings first go to pay rent on the venue before the remaining sum is split between performers. Sometimes they earn as little as 100 yuan for one night's work. It is hard to support families with such humble income. "So far, we've learned that it's a daunting task for a private troupe to survive through its own efforts," sighs Zheng.

Chen Yi (left) and Zheng Xuetao (right) are critically acclaimed for their genuine xiangsheng *style.*

The founders of Hongchun She gather to discuss their troupe's future development.

A fan brings a cake to his favorite performer on his birthday.

請勿忘隨身物品
足下留情 小草常青
CHINGLISH
FOUND IN TRANSLATION
OLIVER LUTZ RADTKE
存取款一体机
Cash Recycling Machine

David Tool disagrees with the tone of the book *Chinglish: found In Translation*, written by his German friend Oliver Lutz Radtke. Rather than laugh at mistranslations included in the book, he was inspired to help improve English accuracy and conformity on public signage.

by Wan Quan

Above & Beyond

Changing the face of Beijing's English Signs

Text by Zhou Jin
Photographs courtesy of David Tool

The Chinese character "问," meaning "ask," contains another character within it – "口," meaning "mouth," vividly suggesting that one must open his mouth to make an inquiry.

Indeed, any visitor to a strange place must be inquisitive, and those in a foreign country, unable to speak the local language, have to rely on universally understood public signage.

David Tool, an American currently teaching at Beijing International Studies University (BISU), has spent years in China endeavoring to ferret out faults in the English wording of signs in shops, restaurants, parks, and museums. His work earned him the honor of bearing the torch for the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and the title of one of Beijing's Top Ten Volunteers.

Inspirational Theater

Tool's efforts in correcting English errors began with an experience at a Peking Opera performance.

In October of 1991, an aficionado of both Shaanxi and Peking Opera, Tool visited Beijing's Chang'an Grand Theater to view the classic play *Havoc in Heaven*. To help foreign viewers better understand the scenes, the theater displayed English subtitles on a screen. However, the well-intentioned endeavor instead resulted in unintended comedy for English-speaking spectators because of glaring mistakes in the translation. For example, the word "clouds" was misspelled so that when the Monkey King entered, the subtitles asserted he was "riding clods."

Tool found some level of discomfort when viewing the scene, disappointed that such mistakes would lead foreign visitors to misunderstand the genuine charm of China's profound culture. That night, he wrote a letter to China's Ministry of Culture explaining the frequent English errors in Beijing's signs, and volunteered his assistance in correcting improper English and providing more accurate translations for tourist signs around town. His letter gained a considerable amount of attention in city hall and inspired the mayor to launch a signage improvement campaign at 80 of the city's most important historical and scenic attractions.

After that, a Westerner clad in traditional Chinese attire could often be spotted amongst the crowd at Beijing's museums, shopping districts, and tourist attractions. After his classes, Tool would lead his students pedaling through the city streets on their mission. Whenever he finds an error, he photographs the sign and sends the picture along with the correct translation to the Foreign Affairs Office of Beijing Municipality. He transformed into a sort of English error exterminator – determined to kill pests wherever they could be found.

A Strict Teacher

Tool prefers to be called "Old Du" or "Teacher Du," because the common Chinese surname "Du" sounds similar to his own. After attaining the rank of colonel during the Vietnam War, Tool taught at the University of Southern California before retiring and moving to China. His schedule these days is tight: From Monday to Wednesday, he teaches at BISU, seeing undergraduates in the morning and postgraduates each afternoon. Each Thursday he visits the Chaoyang District Library to teach English words and phrases to retired residents. Before 2008, his library classes focused on tourist terminology for the Olympic Games, and afterwards he shifted to phrases related to Beijing historical and cultural sites. Even on Saturday he teaches English Proficiency Test classes.

During class, David Tool endeavors to enlighten his students to think independently and join discussions and debates.

Tool is a strict but innovative teacher. Once, he brought a bottle of tomato ketchup and asked his students to tell him "25 items of information about it." He asks his modern youngsters to watch Peking Opera performances so that they can better introduce traditional culture to foreigners. "Chinese students are usually quiet in class," he explains. "They like to simply listen to the teacher's instruction. But American students are more prone to discuss and debate, demonstrating curiosity to find out more." With this in mind, Tool endeavors to motivate students to think independently, ask questions, and conduct in-depth research.

Thanks to their American teacher's inspiration, many of his Chinese students have found a new passion to study Chinese traditional culture. One of them revealed his new fondness for Peking Opera in writing class: "It was the first time in my life I entered a theater to watch the art. Usually, I switched channels if it was on TV, but this time, I watched it all the way through and realized that the opera is actually fantastic!"

都国际语言环境建设系列访谈
请与我们同行
Beijing Speaks To The World

David Tool takes part in a BTV (Beijing Television Station) program on improving the capital's international language environment.

Passion for Culture and City

In his error correction endeavors, Tool gives priority to museums. "Westerners love museums," he explains. "Their understanding of a foreign nation often begins in museums, which, unfortunately, sometimes receive inadequate attention in China."

Zhihua Temple, a Ming Dynasty building complex in Beijing's Dongcheng District, is the oldest existing wooden temple in the city. The ancient architecture retains its original look, untouched by modern technology. Tool and his more mature students — a group of retirees able to speak fluent English — are frequent visitors to the historical site, coming to relate the temple's history and interesting stories about it to foreign tourists. After their impressive English introductions, the elders are often invited to join the tourists for coffee for a further opportunity to pick their brains for knowledge of Chinese culture and history of the capital city.

In a light tone, Tool relates an amusing anecdote: A Sri Lankan monk once predicted that he would live 105 years, but after moving to Beijing, a Taoist guessed his lifespan at 121 years. "I want to live to 121," he grins, "so I decided to stay in Beijing." When asked about his future

After class, David Tool leads his students through Beijing's streets to ferret out errors in the English on road signs and shop nameplates.

我与祖国共奋进
1949-2009

David Tool was invited to join the parade in celebration of the 60th birthday of the P.R.C.

plans, he expressed hope to receive a Chinese green card and own a house in a suburban district such as Miyun or Pinggu with a garden big enough to plant vegetables and raise chickens. "With such a home, my grandson could live there every summer holiday," he remarks, "and I could teach English to local teenagers, especially dropouts from poor families."

Tool insists, "I will remain in Beijing, a city that injected my life full of color and meaning."

David Tool's love for Chinese culture is revealed in his home furnishings. by Wan Quan

A Prayer for Peace

Text and photographs by Xu Xun

Ren Farong, president of China Taoist Association, presides over the sacrificial ceremony.

At 8:30 a.m., 50 banner carriers lined up along both sides of the entrance to ancient Shangqing Town. Six girls wrapped in colorful costumes began dancing to pristine, melodic Taoist music, and the huge gate to the town slowly opened, signaling the commencement of the grandest-ever *qingjiao* (Taoist sacrificial ceremony) since the founding of the People's Republic of China. The ritual was held on Longhu ("Dragon and Tiger") Mountain in southern China's Jiangxi Province on September 8, 2010.

A traditional Taoist ceremony to pray for blessings, *qingjiao* combines religious rituals and folk celebrations, and such events are still prevalent in many Chinese regions, especially provinces of Sichuan, Fujian, and Guangdong.

Since the beginning of this year, the world has been plagued by frequent natural disasters, and China is not an exception. On April 14, a 7.1-magnitude earthquake hit Yushu County, in northwestern China's Qinghai Province; in June, several provinces in South China were struck by devastating floods; and on August 7, a rain-triggered landslide almost flattened Zhouqu County in Gansu Province. These disasters caused considerable casualties and left many more families homeless. The pain and sorrow that disaster-stricken areas suffered touched the hearts of those who live elsewhere. From September 8 to 10, Taoists from around the world gathered in Celestial Master's Mansion on Longhu Mountain, a holy locale for Taoists, to hold a grand *qingjiao* to both mourn global victims and ask the world to unite to lessen the severity of such disasters.

Promptly at 8:30 a.m., the participants began walking towards Celestial Master's Mansion in Shangqing, which was chosen as the primary venue for the sacrificial ceremony. Escorted by attendants holding banners, they passed by the ancient town's archaic teahouses and taverns manned by vendors dressed in traditional costumes of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) while performers presented folk customs and arts. By the time of their arrival, Celestial Master's Mansion was already crowded with visitors eager to participate in the ritual. Ren Farong, president of the China Taoist Association, presided over the ceremony. Taoist masters from the three sacred mountains of Longhu, Maoshan, and Wudang joined their counterparts from Taiwan and Hong Kong to perform the rituals together.

The site of the ceremony, Longhu Mountain, is considered the birthplace of Taoism in China. During the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220), Zhang Ling, the founder of the Zhengyi Sect of Taoism, attempted to make immortality pills while on the mountain. It is said that when the pills were finished, a dragon and a tiger appeared, hence the mountain's name. Zhang was later canonized to become the first-generation Celestial Master. Over almost two millennia, the title of Celestial Master has been passed down 63 generations of the Zhang clan. In past feudal dynasties, Celestial Masters often served as high-ranking officials in imperial courts. So not surprisingly, the Zhangs became an aristocratic clan able to rival even the Confucian family. At its zenith, Longhu Mountain was sprinkled with more than 200 Taoist palaces and temples. Most of them disappeared over the centuries, but remaining structures such as the magnificent Shangqing Palace and Celestial Master's Mansion still remind the contemporary world of the mountain's past glory.

A sacred shrine of Taoism, Celestial Master's Mansion sits in the heart of Shangqing Town. Lute Peak towers above its south side, while Luxi River trickles by to the north. The magnificent buildings of the mansion demonstrate unparalleled dignity. Hung atop its main gate is a pair of couplets written by Dong Qichang, a noted painter and calligrapher of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), declaring that Celestial Masters were both immortals and high-ranking aristocrats.

By 7 p.m., the *qingjiao* ceremony reached its height when 10,000 people gathered at a rafting marina to send lotus lanterns floating away with hopes for blessings. Under a starry sky, thousands of flickering lights drifted downstream, carrying people's best wishes for an abundant, peaceful life.

Taoist masters from both home and abroad gather in Celestial Master's Mansion to attend the sacrificial ceremony.

Banner holders lead Taoist masters from around China to the ceremonial site.

MY CUP

Even when I had little knowledge about tea, I already loved the Pu'er variety, and after I recently visited the city of Pu'er, I gained some profound insight. As I returned home to the comfort of my sofa, I found myself mesmerized by its mellow, conservative flavor the moment my lips touched the brew. I never expected that after my visit to the place, Pu'er tea would find such firm footing in my heart.

Pu'er tea is named after the historical distribution hub serving many tea-growing places around Yunnan Province. In early winter, the area is soaked in a dark green hue, caused by rows upon rows of terraced tea fields. The trees flourish with thick and juicy leaves, dazzling in the glow of the vibrant sun. While roaming aimlessly through the shrubs, I was curious to learn about the plant's journey before ending up in my cup, but silhouettes of women plucking leaves in the garden can only be seen in spring. Fortunately, I visited a local tea museum, where I was en-

OF TEA

Text and photographs by Wang Lei

Savoring tea is an art in China.

At Pu'er tea gardens, tourists will be invited to join local singers and dancers while sampling the tea.

A Bulang girl brews up Pu'er tea for visiting guests.

lightened by exhibitions of various tools used in the production of Pu'er tea, along with samples of vintage teas from across the ages. The museum's map of the Ancient Tea-Horse Road, the famous trade route connecting Tibet, Yunnan, and Sichuan in antiquity, leads visitors back to the stories that took place along the caravan trail.

It should come as no surprise that China is home to a wide variety of tea, and unlike the elegant green tea widely grown in the regions south of the lower Yangtze River, Pu'er tea features thick branches and broad leaves. It is generally divided into two types: raw and ripe (fermented). "Ripe" Pu'er tea is dark brown with a strong flavor. Historically, this variety was often transported to Tibet or even further because it was a favorite of primarily carnivorous nomads. The rich tea aided digestion of their meat-heavy diet, while providing some nutrients they lacked when vegetables were in short supply. For the convenience of transportation, processed leaves were pressed on a concave stone until they formed a solid brick. The bricks can come in a variety of shapes, and the tea can keep for a long time. In fact, it even improves in taste as time passes, as a result of constant oxidation during storage. The longer the tea is kept, the stronger the aroma will become, and it will remain soluble even after a century of storage. Thanks to this trait, the tea's value appreciates over time, making it a favorite of many Chinese collectors.

Rather than gulping it down, many Chinese people like to savor and appreciate tea while relaxing. To them, drinking tea is not just about refreshment, but rather becomes symbolic of their attitudes towards life. Tea drinking inspires passionate enthusiasts in China, not unlike wine-tasting or coffee drinking in the West. Because of varying processing techniques, different types of Chinese tea each bring different flavors. Some enthusiasts like to explore a plethora of varieties and share the experience

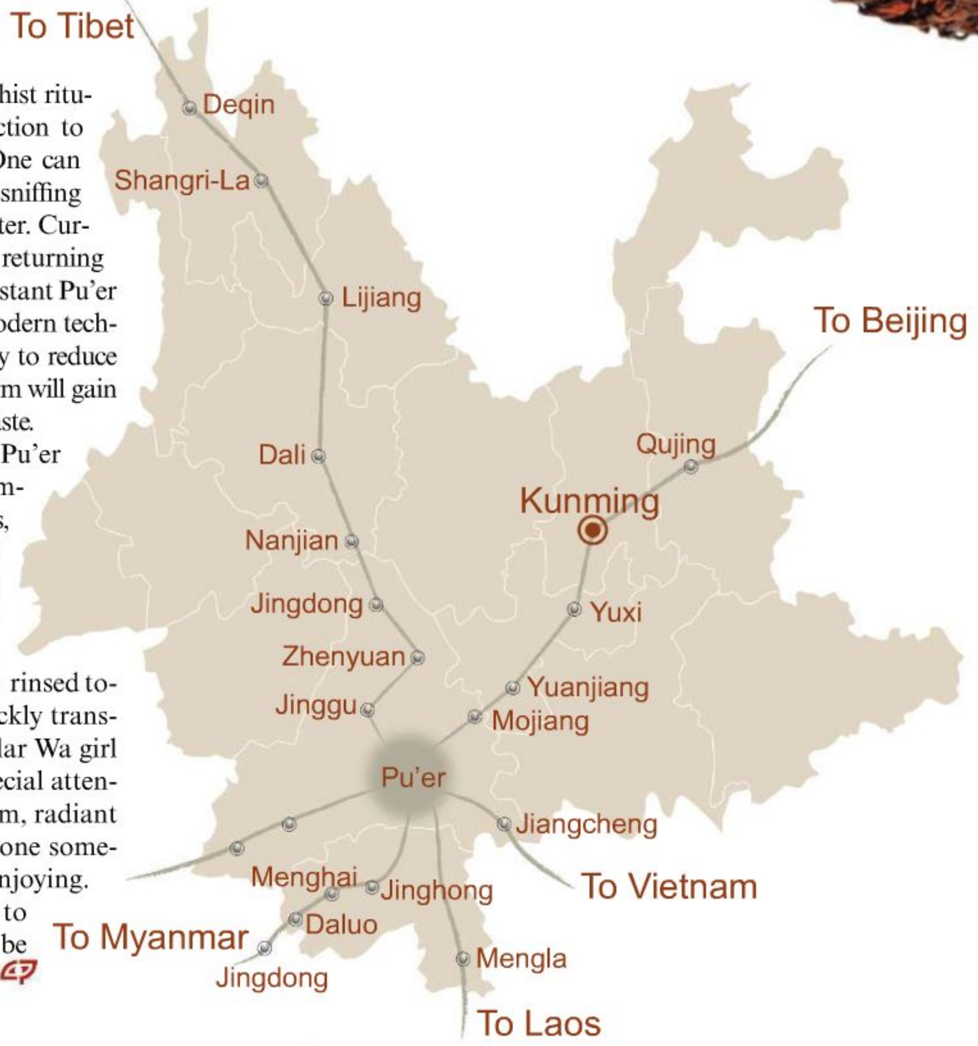
with friends, while others remain devoted to one specific type. Some like to ponder and discuss while savoring the flavor, while others prefer to aim for a carefree mind. Regardless of the variances in preferences amongst the public, Pu'er tea's intoxicating flavor has been winning over many former fans of lighter green teas.

Traditionally, tea brewing was part of Buddhist rituals for cultivating the spirit, and after introduction to Japan, it evolved into sado, or tea ceremony. One can imagine the spiritual feeling attained simply by sniffing the fumes when leaves are tossed into boiling water. Currently, a group of innovators, headed by a Ph.D. returning from the United States, are working to develop instant Pu'er tea by processing the leaves into powder using modern technology. According to them, the tea's natural ability to reduce blood sugar levels will remain, while the instant form will gain the advantages of convenient usage and a gentler taste.

As Pu'er tea's reputation grew, the city of Pu'er gained fame right along with it, the leaf becoming the city's representative icon. In recent years, local authorities have been working to develop tea-related tourism. During my visit, I had the opportunity to witness a traditional tea ceremony presented by youngsters from the Wa and Hani ethnic groups. The Pu'er leaves were rinsed together with baked barley in a clay pot and quickly transformed into a delightful beverage. One particular Wa girl with a darker sun-tanned complexion drew special attention from the visiting tourists for her enthusiasm, radiant smile, and perhaps more so because her skin tone somewhat matched the color of the drink we were enjoying.

For a moment, I felt I understood the key to happiness in life, but then again it could just be that my heart was warmed by the hot tea.

Vintage Pu'er tea appears golden brown.



Sketch Map of the Ancient Tea-Horse Road

In light fog, the tea garden emits an idyllic aura.

Into Thin Air

2010 China International Air Sports Fiesta

Text and photographs by Wang Lei

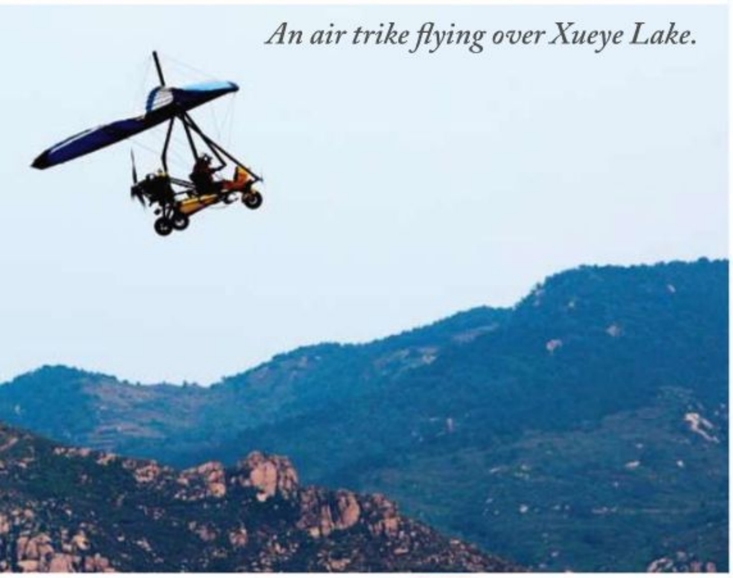
Parachute performance.

The air was crisp at Xueye Lake in late September, and those falling through it after jumping from airplanes or rising into the sky in a hot air balloon would be the first to tell you. Laiwu City's Xueye Lake in eastern China's Shandong Province hosted the China International Air Sports Fiesta from September 25 to 29, 2010. Nearly 1,000 pilots from 18 nations including the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Japan, Germany, South Korea, Sweden, Australia, and Spain joined flyers from nearly 30 Chinese provinces and municipalities to participate in the event. It included 10 major competitions and performances such as aerobatic flying, skydiving, paramotor, light helicopter, hot air balloon, air trike, model airplane, light plane, powered glider, and simulated motion. Altogether, 358 different aircraft and pieces of flying equipment were used, and more than 1,000 volunteers along with a staff of 2,000 provided services for more than 300,000 spectators in attendance.

TF
KL
Angry Fish

Stunt pilots soar and dive.

A stunt performance from the Spanish team.



An air trike flying over Xueye Lake.

A powered hang glider formation.

The opening ceremony kicked off the event with fantastic performance by skydivers. Seven female skydivers dressed as fairies from ancient Chinese tales created an amazing show for the audience once their chutes opened, wearing ribbons and throwing flower petals in the air. Air trikes flew in formation and completed impressive stunts, including the most exciting performed by world champions from Germany and Spain. These demonstrations were complemented by hot air balloon performers from China and abroad, with the largest balloon measuring over 2,000 cubic meters.

Every day brought different performances and competitions during the five-day festival. Contests included the China International Stunt Flying Master Challenge, 2010 National Parachute Tournament, 2010 Paramotor Masters Tournament, 2010 National Simulated Flying Tournament, 2010 National Simulated Remote Control Flying Tournament, and China Model Airplane Fans Open Tournament. Additional activities included an Air Sports Facilities Exhibition and the China News Aerial Photography Tournament. This marked Laiwu's second hosting of the fiesta, so it received even more attention than the previous event. Sponsored by China's General Administration of Sport and the Shandong Provincial Government, the fiesta was hosted by Aero Sports Federation of China, Shandong Provincial Administration of Sport, and Laiwu Municipal People's Government.

Laiwu was already an important agricultural area and steel and energy production base in Shandong before attracting people from all over the world with air sports. The festival is sure to stimulate local economic development, and Xueye Lake, above which much of the action took place, creates a beautiful landscape around its wide water surface.

"We have enjoyed wonderful performances and competitions in Laiwu," remarked Pierre Portmann, president of the World Air Sports Federation. "I believe it is the perfect platform for the blossoming Chinese aero sports industry, while offering opportunities for international exchange and cooperation. The city will not only become the air sports capital of China, but a major global air sports hub."

Balloon performance.

Throngs of people gathered from all over China.

Walking on Water

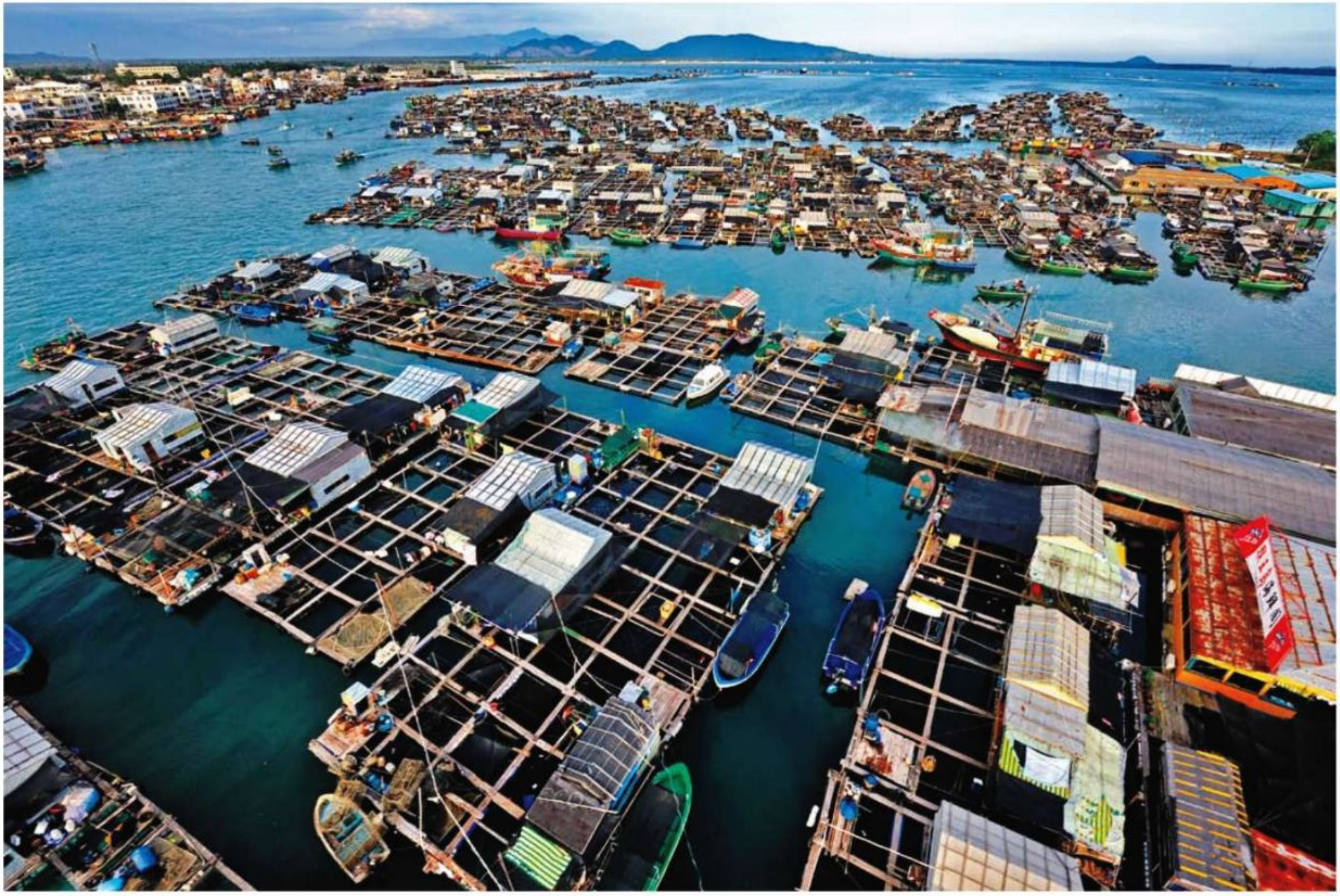
Hainan's Sea People

Text and photographs by Fan Jing

Typically, all members of a Dan family live under the same roof.

China's southernmost province, the island of Hainan, was called the "edge of the sky and rim of the sea" in ancient times due to its remoteness. However, human civilization emerged almost concurrently on the island and the Chinese mainland. Prior to the birth of agricultural societies, the island's primitive residents already developed prosperous fishing and hunting culture, taking advantage of plentiful local bays and harbors. Today, wooden houseboats docked in the bays and tropical landscapes of sandy beaches and palm trees help Hainan retain its poetic aura as one of Earth's celestial resorts.

A bird's-eye view of the houseboats inhabited by Dan people.



In the southwest corner of Hainan, Ledong Li Autonomous County is notable for Yingge Port, a renowned fishing harbor, and Li'an Port which is famous for producing pearls and seafood. However, neither rivals Lingshui Li Autonomous County's Xincun Port in terms of marine culture and tropical scenery. In the southeast section of Xincun Town, the port measures four kilometers in length from north to south and six kilometers from east to west, accounting for a total area of 24 square kilometers. Its shape resembles a fetus curled up in a womb-shaped bay formed by Lingshui County's coastline and Nanwan Peninsula. The port features a vast, placid gulf with a narrow mouth, which makes it an ideal harbor to shelter inbound vessels.

An aerial view of the bay will reveal that the pristine blue water of Xincun Port is crowded with variously-shaped houseboats lined up across the bay. The residents of these houseboats call themselves the "Dan" people.

The Dan are an ethnic group that has continuously lived on the sea since antiquity. Unlike fishermen from China's eastern seaboard who maintain permanent shelter on land, the Dan choose to reside on houseboats or rafts on the sea. Many from the group only set foot on land a few times during their life. They are natives of the sea, with their homes floating above it. For this reason, many have referred to the group as "Gypsies of Chinese oceans."

At the docks rest a dozen boats with outboard motors used to ferry passengers between a community of houseboats and the coast. Such boats essentially function like taxis in cities. Despite the crowded waters, boatmen line up their ferries in the order of arrival when waiting for passengers. Typically, a single boat can accommodate 10 passengers with benches on both sides. Fare usually costs 0.5 yuan per person round trip, but students and the elderly are often allowed to travel for free. The ferries are painted bright red, yellow, orange, blue, or green. When bathed in the afternoon sunshine, the boats bouncing across waves as the houseboats and rafts sway on the sea against the backdrop of the bustling streets on the shore can create a scene worthy of depiction in a Renaissance oil painting.

I took a ferry to a Dan community on the sea. The residences are mostly single-story homes featuring walls of tin plates or water-proof planks, glass windows with aluminum-plastic frames, and lacquered wooden floors anchored with steel and iron framework – all sitting on a raft. Surrounding the houses are crisscrossing footpaths constructed with long planks, each measuring 30-40 centimeters in width, floating on pontoons or plastic foam. Under the footpaths, dozens of black nets dip into the water to gather aquatic products. Typically, a dozen families compose one residential quarter, while ferries and fishing boats use connecting waterways to commute passengers.

Far from such a residential quarter, I noticed a dozen women and children resting in the shade. My ferry docked, and I disembarked. The family I visited, the Chens, included more than 30 members. When I arrived, they were eating dinner around three tables. The older men dined at the table inside the house while women and children sat in the shade outside, and the younger men ate on a boat.

Going to the sea.

While sitting on the wooden floor in front of the house, I began a casual conversation with Mr. Chen, the family's patriarch. According to him, the Dan ancestors relocated there from Shunde, Guangdong Province. In years past, few received any education at school, and their language and cultural heritage were passed down only mouth-to-mouth across the generations. Today, some Dan elders can speak both Cantonese and Hainan dialect, but most youngsters speak Mandarin and Hainan dialect. "Prior to the founding of New China, Dan people led a rather undignified life," Chen asserted. "If they were

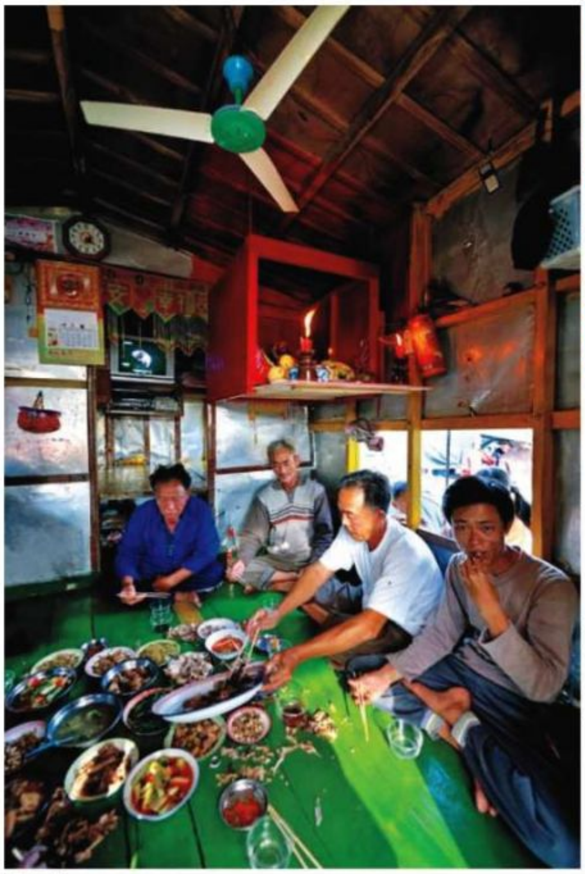
A houseboat on the sea.

caught wearing shoes on the streets, they would be punished. Our social status has tremendously improved over recent decades. In the 1960s and 70s, Dan people implemented collective labor and equal distribution, just like farmers onshore did. After China's reform and opening-up policies were enacted, the Dan people introduced the household contract responsibility system. Many families gained considerable wealth through cultivating marine products." Presently, the Chen family operates an aquatic breeding farm that covers more than 200 square meters of the water surface. They use netted boxes to breed marine animals, and sometimes after catching wild fish, they breed them in farms.

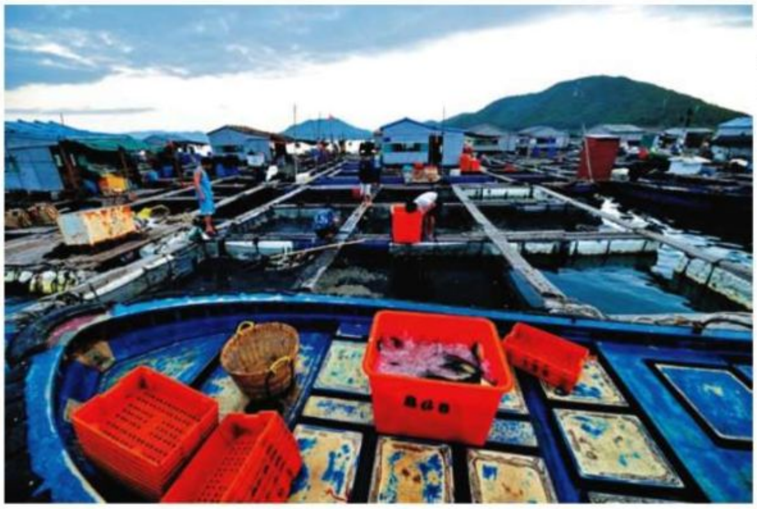
According to Mr. Chen, freshwater and electricity used on their houseboat are transported from the shore. Some households are equipped with generators able to provide power for lighting, television, and cell phones. Usually, sewage goes directly into the sea. Each household maintains its own fish breeding area, which is labeled with a number that matches the home's doorplate. Local fishermen communicate with fishery departments using interphones.

Before the 1990s, most Dan people received little education. Typically, children became fishermen after graduating from the middle school. But now the situation has changed. Each year, several Xincun Port youngsters attend college. Better education leads to more employment opportunities. While some Dan people leave the marine communities to find employment on land, even the highly-educated often choose to stay on the sea. The prosperity of local fishing and marine product cultivation industries has created considerable job opportunities close to home, many of which offer higher salaries.

In today's Xincun Port, the elders take care of the land-based homes while the more able residents spend most of their time in houseboats year-round, fishing and working in aquatic breeding farms. They only visit the elders on land for a few days during Spring Festival. Students take ferries to land-based school in the morning, and return to the houseboats when classes end. Shuttling between shore and the houseboats is convenient since the ferries operate 24 hours a day.

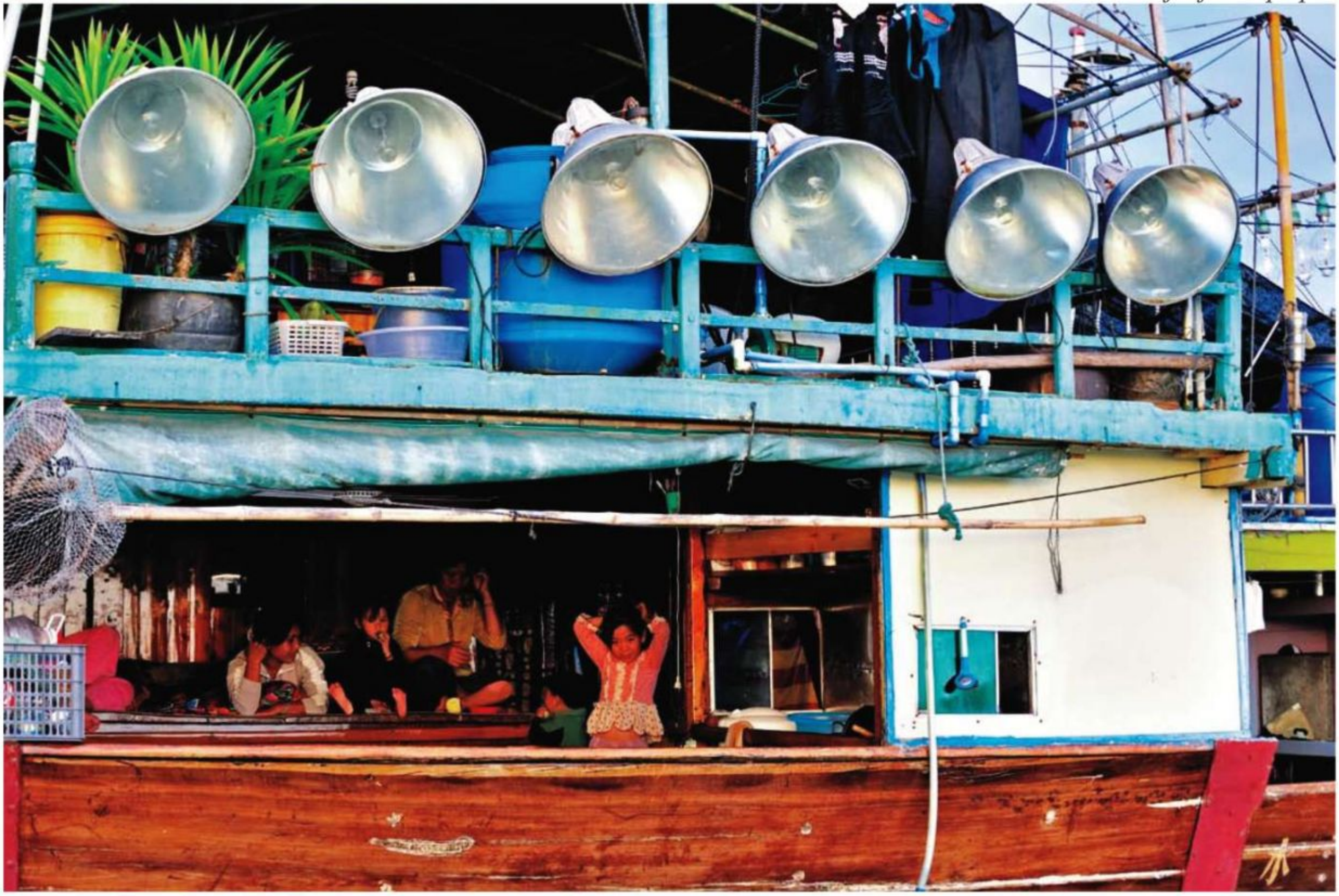


According to Dan tradition, only elder males are allowed to eat inside after offering sacrifices to their ancestors.



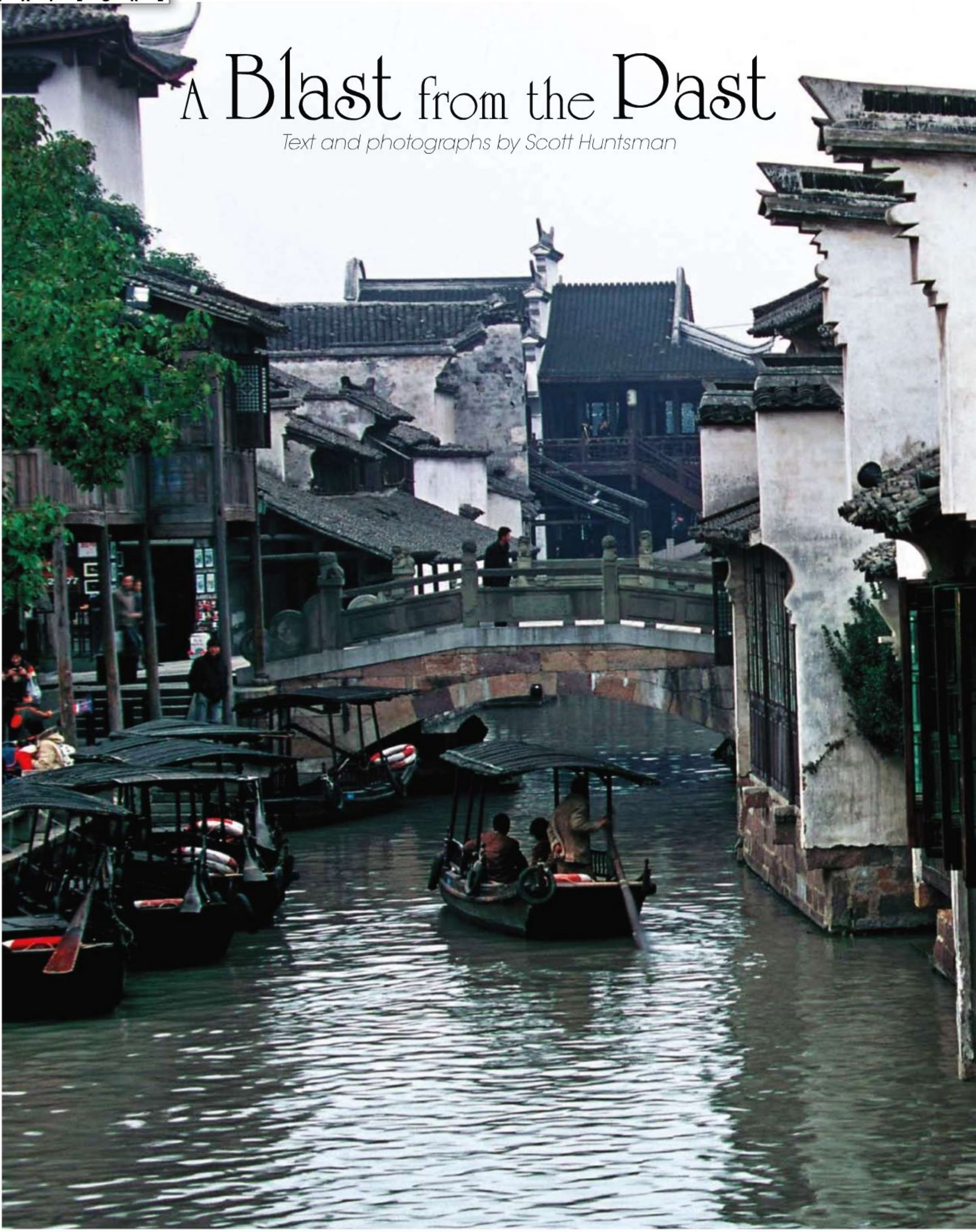
Most Dan people make a living with sea products.

With the improvement of living conditions, electric lamps have become common in the everyday life of Dan people.



A Blast from the Past

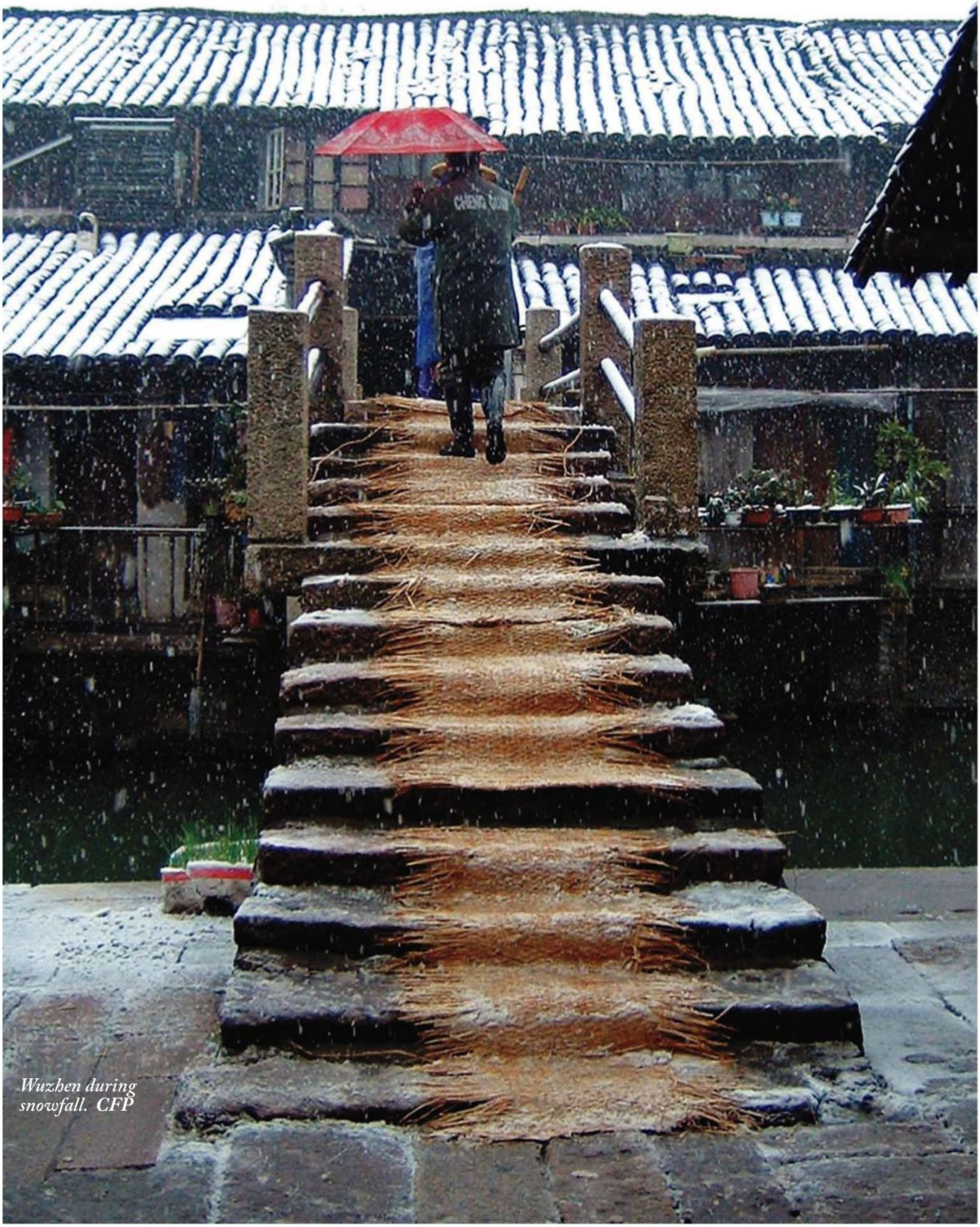
Text and photographs by Scott Huntsman



Wuzhen, one of South China's most popular ancient towns. CFP

The spacious visitor's center looked like train stations I've seen in smaller Chinese cities. The generous air conditioning provided temporary refuge from the sweltering Zhejiang summer, but I knew it wouldn't be long before we would be back outside with the brutal southeast China August afternoon sun beating down. And of course within minutes, we were back outside piling into tour trams and speeding down a neat concrete path clearly built for no other traffic. I knew we were meant to see an ancient Chinese village with a 1,300-year history, but the trip was starting to feel like a visit to either the Universal Studios backlot or Jurassic Park. The latter would be a more appropriate comparison, because like the film about dinosaurs coming back to life, visiting the stunning village of Wuzhen is not unlike a theme park trip through a time machine.

After being unloaded from the trams, the tour guide welcomed us into another open-air tourist center, where a cross-section model of the town's street depicted how power lines, cable TV, telephones, water, and sewage had each been separately buried underground. Again, my concept of visiting an "ancient Chinese village," coupled with the demonstration of underground cable TV wiring, left me a bit confused, but once I experienced the stone streets of Wuzhen, I started understanding better what this tourist attraction was about.



Wuzhen during snowfall. CFP

Many of the dilapidated ancient villages have disappeared with China's recent progress, but Wuzhen was preserved and restored into a remarkable first-rate tourist resort. The town was built amidst a network of canals which make it somewhat like a quaint Chinese Venice. A boatman ferried us across what seemed like a moat before we could actually set foot in the actual town. When walking down the city's central thoroughfare, the preserved authenticity of every shop is remarkable, but they're all clearly redeveloped for tourism purposes only. Just under the towering pagoda near the city's gates, the stone exterior of a small bar hides the indoor neon lights and big screen TVs showing NBA highlights. An ancient bookstore sells scrolls of characters brushed on bamboo slats, not so much practical today, but a great souvenir. Most of the town's original shops along the street were reopened, selling the same thing they did centuries ago.

Every few blocks, a quaint stone bridge crossed the city's central canal, which was also perpetually filled with traditional boats full of tourists. The town's nicest hotel was open for VIP business, and a sign in the window offered every service the most discerning traveler could imagine in both Chinese and English. I questioned the fact that the nicest hotel, and indeed the nicest buildings, were on the opposite side of the street from the water, sacrificing a stunning aquatic view. Our tour guide confirmed that in antiquity the richer people lived on that side, and asked me to guess why. "Mosquitos!" I blurted out, and she smiled in agreement, but added that also more manual labor was performed on the water side. Certainly if the water was dirty or smelly back then, the town has lost some authenticity since the water is pristine now.

I noticed a sign pointing towards a "foot-binding museum" down an alley off the main road, but our tour guide never mentioned anything about it, so I quietly broke off from the group. After a few hundred meters, I found a dark old building with a couple of wax statues depicting the ancient procedure once performed on Chinese women, but the display was clearly not ready for the public. We stayed only on the city's central road during our visit and saw plenty, so who knows how much potential for future tourism development Wuzhen has. I wouldn't be surprised if someday animatronic robot people demonstrate ancient Chinese culture all over the town. There is an ongoing debate as to tourism's effect on native regional cultures, and Wuzhen is a great model of how creating a modern tourist resort can provide plentiful funds to preserve the aroma of yesteryear even if the carbon-dating of every stone doesn't satisfy historical purists.

As we neared the end of the mile, nearly everyone in our group was soaked in sweat from the summer sun, but nary could a frowny face be found. We stopped into a restaurant that thankfully had powerful air conditioning, and I rushed to a seat close to the life-saving machine. But I don't think that was authentic. The beer was cold too, and I'm maybe 87 percent sure they couldn't do that in the olden days.

As we waited for the ferry to take us back, we peeked over the shoulders of elementary school students who were brought to the water to practice drawing the dazzling water scenery. I was jealous. I never got to go on a field trip to a place like this when I was that age.

An ancient pharmacy.

Travel Tips

Admission

Regular admission for the east section (featured in this article) is 100 yuan and the west section is 120. Daily admission for both sections is 150 yuan.

How to Get There

Wuzhen lies within the triangle created by Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Suzhou, and buses are available from any of those cities. By car it is less than a two-hour drive.

Where to Stay

Hotels within the actual ancient town can be affordable, but vary widely, with prices ranging from around 100 yuan a night to over 1,000. Local guesthouses often rent rooms for as low as 50 yuan.

What to Buy

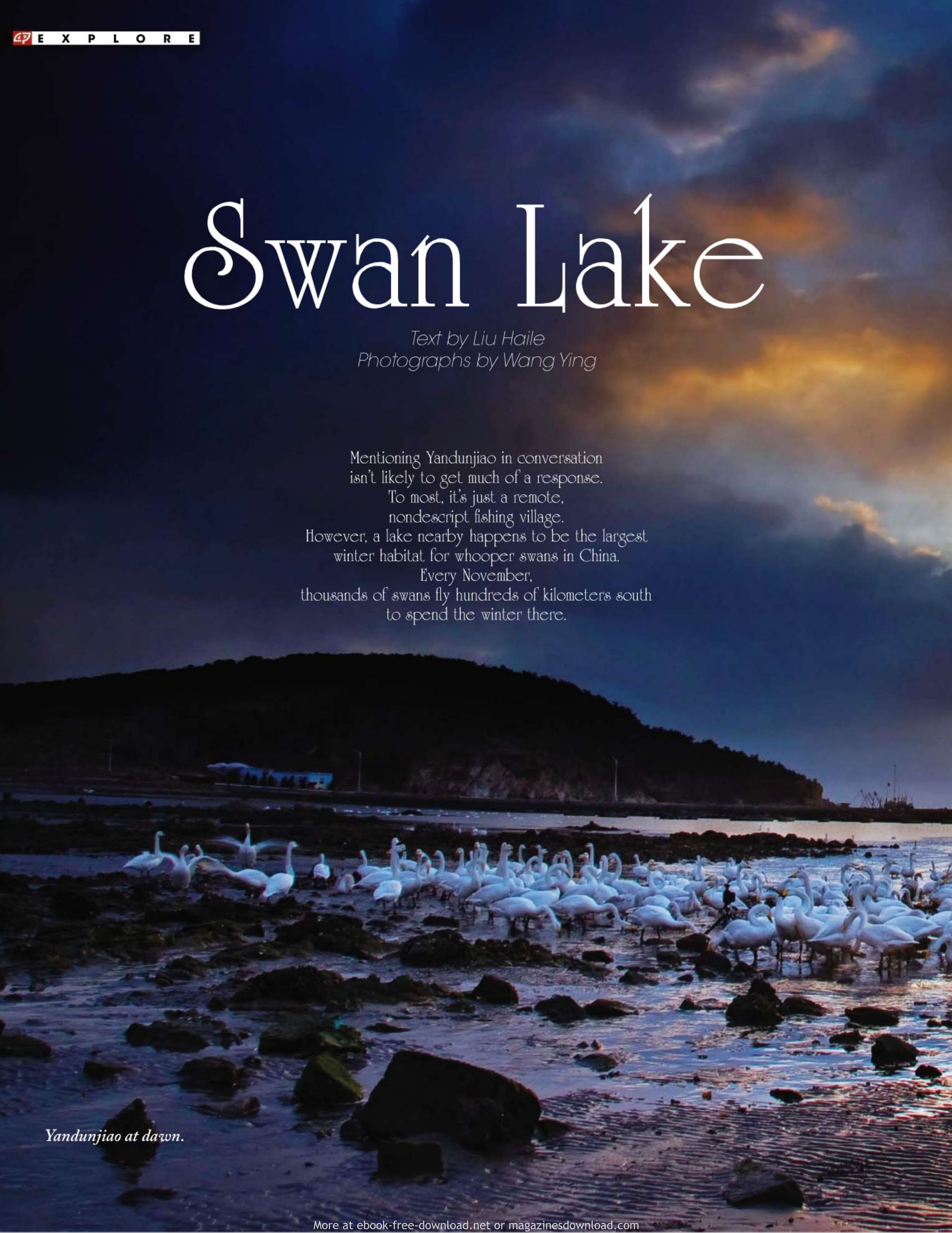
A plethora of historical souvenirs are available along the ancient street.

Common scenes in Wuzhen.

Swan Lake

Text by Liu Haile
Photographs by Wang Ying

Mentioning Yandunjiao in conversation
isn't likely to get much of a response.
To most, it's just a remote,
nondescript fishing village.
However, a lake nearby happens to be the largest
winter habitat for whooper swans in China.
Every November,
thousands of swans fly hundreds of kilometers south
to spend the winter there.



Yandunjiao at dawn.

Literally, Yandunjiao translates to "beacon tower point," deriving its name from the building atop Gushan Hill to the east of the village. On the shore of the Yellow Sea in Rongcheng City, Shandong Province, the village can be traced back to the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), and later the beacon tower was constructed to spot invaders from the sea. Today, about 500 families living in the village take advantage of the several streams running across the land which form a vast marshland and a freshwater coastal lake. Lured by the plentiful food provided by the marshland and lake, copious numbers of migratory birds, including swans and mallards, settle there in winter. In January, the avian population can exceed 10,000, and when they hover in flocks above the water, they compose some spectacular scenes.

Of all the transient residents of Yandunjiao, the rarest species is the whooper swan. In mid-November, flocks fly thousands of miles from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region as well as from Mongolia and Russia to stay in Yandunjiao until early March.

The swans' life in Yandunjiao is very routine. They fly away in the morning to find food and return in the evening.

At dawn, when the sun gently peeks over Gushan Hill in the east before shimmering off the bay near Yandunjiao, against the golden glow, most of the swans set off over the sea to search for food, creating fantastic images. Before lifting off, they seem to sprint across the water surface like it's a runway, picking up speed against the wind. Their webbed feet disturb the glassy water as their wings

Traditional residences roofed with seaweed in Yandunjiao.

begin beating at a rhythmic pace. Soon, they're off into the sky. A swan family usually consists of five to seven members, and they usually take off together, the patriarch in the lead. Their landing sequence also features elegant appeal. The silhouette of airborne swans draws nearer and nearer to the horizon as they approach the shore. Once they are visible, they will spread their wings wide and catch the air to slow down. Then, they extend their feet forward and use them as brakes in the water as they touch down, seemingly waterskiing for a few seconds.

At dusk, when the setting sun dyes the seawater red, fishermen pull in their nets and return home, and the swans follow suit, flying back to the lake. Some birds casually float across the water while others chase and play with their peers, and a few seemingly vain swans comb their feathers with their beaks. The graceful silhouettes against the sunset add an eternal tranquility to the already serene lake.

When darkness covers the land, swans go to sleep in their flocks, with heads buried under their feathers. Each flock has a guard on alert, with a bobbing neck and wide-open eyes. If a predator approaches or cars roar by on nearby roads, the guard will cry to alert the others, and the flock will swim further from the shore.

Most swan habitats are unpopulated by humans, but Yandunjiao is an exception. There, the locals habitually love and protect wild birds. Yandunjiao's ecosystem hasn't been dominated by industrial humans, and villagers still dwell in traditional houses laid with stone and roofed with seaweed. To ensure that they stay protected, years ago, the area was declared a national nature reserve for whooper swans. With constant improvements to the natural environment, increasing numbers of swans are finding their way to the lake for the winter.

Local swan protection organizations feed the swans twice or three times a day, causing some of the birds to grow accustomed to human feeding. When they see a person carrying a red plastic barrel (filled with corn) stepping onto a reef near the shore, the intuitive birds know it's time for dinner. At first, only two or three birds will swim slowly towards the feeder, but soon dozens more will follow the cue and gather around. Soon virtually every swan in the vicinity will fly to the feeder.

China is home to several other noted swan habitats such as Bayan Bulak Grassland in Inner Mongolia and Qinghai Lake in Gansu Province. Although Yandunjiao is much smaller than the aforementioned places, it is unique as the place where man can experience close contact with the swans.

What better winter getaway than spending some time with elegant swans on their lake? For many, a visit is etched in their memory forever like a fairytale romance.

A formation of swans in flight.

A one-year-old swan takes off together with her mother.

A family gathering of swans.

Travel Tips

How to Get There:

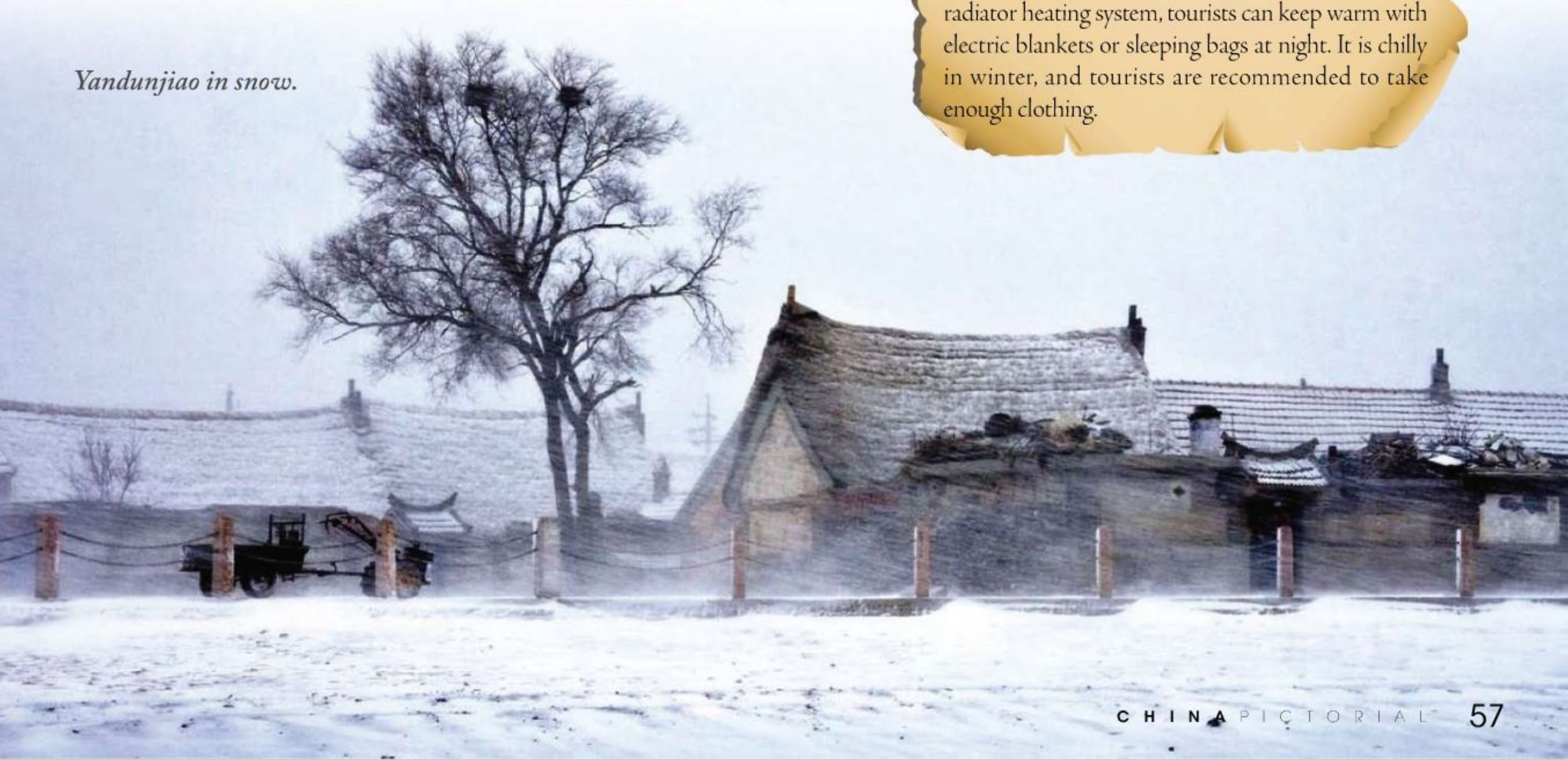
By air, tourists should go to Weihai Airport, and from there it takes about 45 minutes by bus to reach urban Rongcheng. Yandunjiao is a 40-minute drive from downtown Rongcheng. Also, regular buses link Weihai Long-Distance Bus Station directly to Yandunjiao.

When to Go:

The best time to visit Yandunjiao is from November to March, when thousands of swans spend the winter there.

Where to Stay:

Tourists can stay at local hostels. Because most of them are not equipped with the common Chinese radiator heating system, tourists can keep warm with electric blankets or sleeping bags at night. It is chilly in winter, and tourists are recommended to take enough clothing.

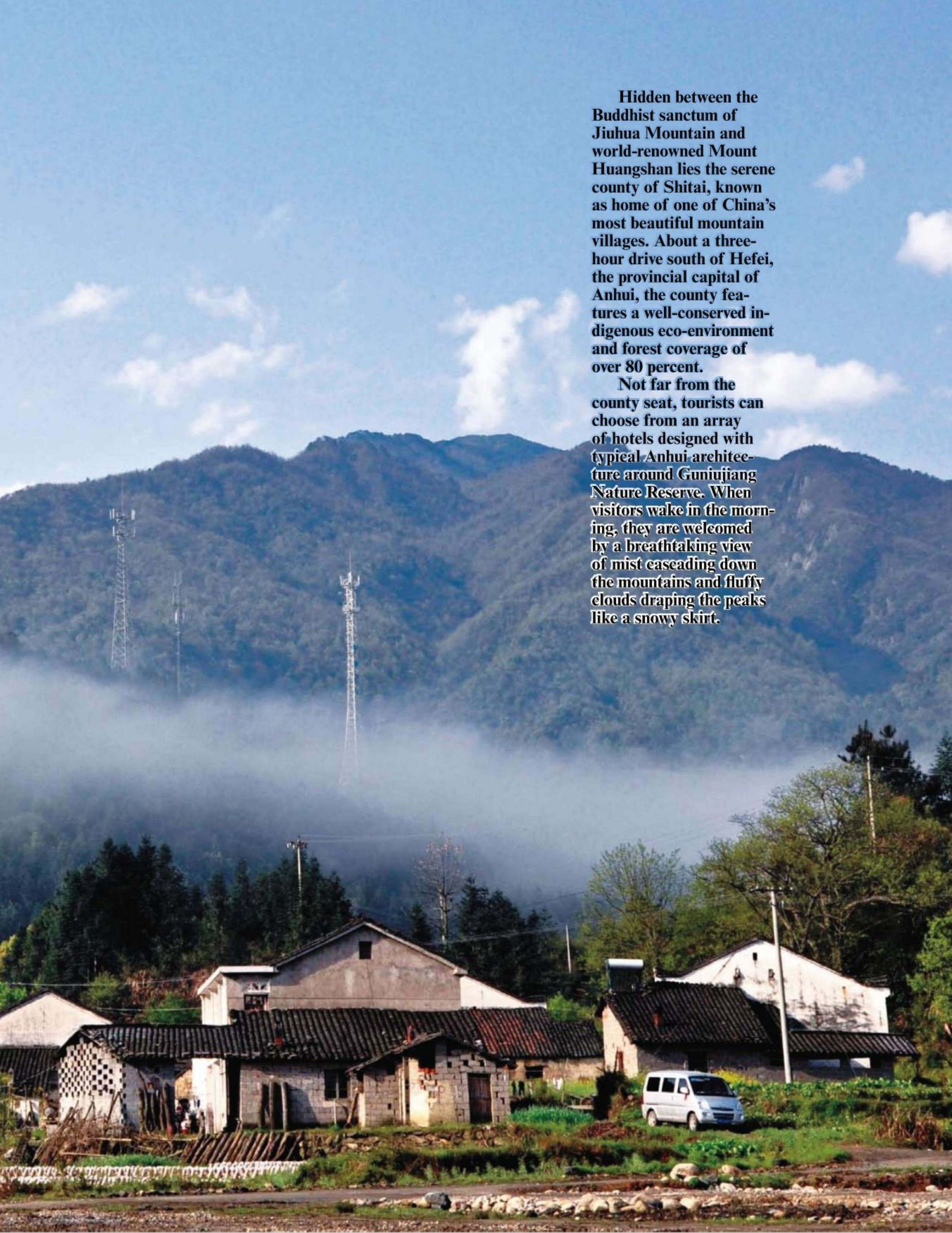


Yandunjiao in snow.

Vistas of Valleys, Villages & Caverns

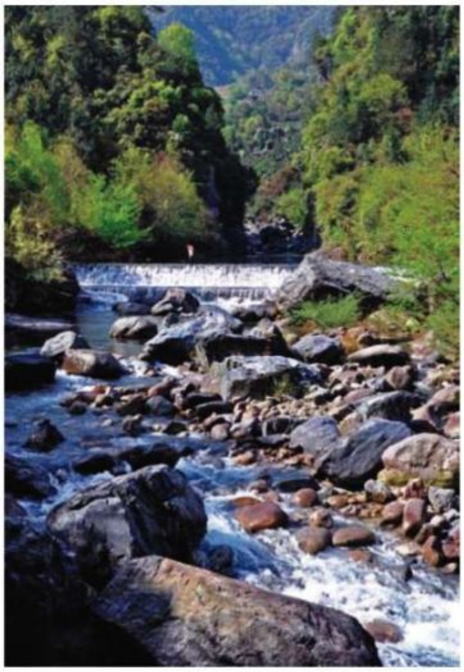
Text and photographs by Branden Chen

A cloud-covered mountain near Guniujiang Nature Reserve.



Hidden between the Buddhist sanctum of Jiuhua Mountain and world-renowned Mount Huangshan lies the serene county of Shitai, known as home of one of China's most beautiful mountain villages. About a three-hour drive south of Hefei, the provincial capital of Anhui, the county features a well-conserved indigenous eco-environment and forest coverage of over 80 percent.

Not far from the county seat, tourists can choose from an array of hotels designed with typical Anhui architecture around Guniujiang Nature Reserve. When visitors wake in the morning, they are welcomed by a breathtaking view of mist cascading down the mountains and fluffy clouds draping the peaks like a snowy skirt.



Gurgling streams flow through Guniujiang Nature Reserve.

Visceral Valley

Guniujiang Nature Reserve straddles the border between Shitai and Qimen counties with a core area of 67 million square meters. From atop the stone bridge at the entrance to the scenic resort, tourists can marvel at the green-carpeted Guniujiang Valley spread on one side and a strikingly yellow canola meadow on the other. During springtime, the golden flowers account for the dominant hue of an enchanting vista against the backdrop of rows upon rows of white-walled, gray-roofed houses. Adjacent to the bridge are several locally-owned restaurants outside which elders often bask in the sun over a cup of tea and women lay bamboo shoots out to air dry.

When walking along the narrow path leading into the valley, city folks are often stunned by the fresh, cool air and will notice the quaint mountain brook that alternates between placid and torrential before dumping off the rocks into a gentle waterfall. Some brave tourists like to venture along the stone steps leading right through it. The valley excursion later leads to a large tea garden painting the mountainside above a roaring river. The garden's staple product is a kind of green tea called Wuliqing (literally "green in the mist").

The tea has been enjoyed as far away as Europe for centuries, and a legend ending only a few decades ago furthered its already sterling reputation. In 1745, the Gothernburg, the most advanced Swedish merchant ship of the 18th century, sank at its European port after its third journey to China. Not until 1984 was the ship finally salvaged from the ocean floor, and then searchers discovered

Powerlines crisscross quaint architecture.

the Shitai-produced Wuliqing tea leaves onboard were still soluble after soaking in salt water for over 200 years.

In the garden, tourists can personally pick tea leaves with guidance from the staff, and then the leaves are processed at a nearby factory before being brewed for the pickers to drink.

Vintage Village

After exiting Guniuling Valley, visitors can tour nearby Yanjiacun Village, where ancient residential abodes are complemented with antiquated Anhui-style mills, ancestral temples, and walls adorned with slogans from different historical periods.

Yanjiacun's residents are primarily descendants of Yan Ziling, a famous hermit of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). As a child, Yan distinguished himself with exceptional wisdom and stood out from his schoolmates, including Liu Xiu, who would later become Emperor Wudi. After ascending the throne, the new emperor dispatched several envoys to Mt. Fuchun in Zhejiang to find Yan. The envoys begged Yan to leave his life of seclusion and serve in the imperial court, but he rejected the offer over and over, even when the emperor made a personal visit. To commemorate their ancestor and his place of retreat, villagers built him an ancestral temple and named it "Fuchun House." Now, it is filled with portraits and biographies of the clan's most celebrated figures across its generations. The village is a satisfying destination for tourists hungry to experience local customs, examine ancient houses, sample distinctive foods, and perhaps spend a night in a traditional guesthouse.

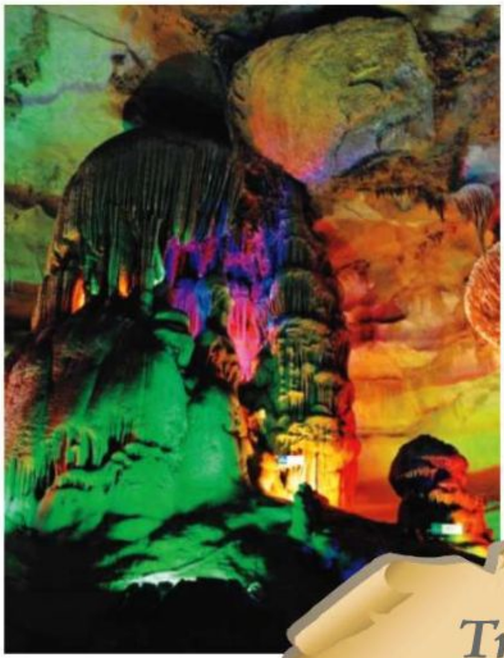
Cryptic Cave

Another pleasant experience to be had in Shitai is a visit to a karst limestone cave complex located in Ducun Village of Gongxi Township, about nine kilometers from the county seat. Locally known as "Penglai Immortal Cave," the complex covers more than 20,000 square meters of densely distributed stalagtites and endless underground water. Inside the caves, limestone curtains set off the stalagmites of various shapes, often appearing like galloping dragons, sharp swords, flocks of sheep, and images of Buddha. They're linked by zigzagged cement paths and small bridges, which give tourists the feeling of traveling through a painting.

When leaving the caves for the mountain path, travelers may meet villagers picking leaves of Chinese mahogany trees on the slope. When the villagers spot approaching tourists, they will quickly come to hawk their home-grown vegetables, fresh mountain fish, and locally produced fungi.

Yet words can only do so much in describing Shitai's beauty, and static photographs only provide a bit more insight. A visit is a truly sensory experience that can consume all of them, providing a welcome refuge for those perpetually enveloped by skyscrapers, neon lights, and seas of traffic.

The Ancestral Temple of Yanjiacun Village.


A spectacle in Penglai Immortal Cave.

Travel Tips

How to Get There:

By automobile, it takes about three hours to travel the 253 kilometers from Hefei to Shitai. A bus is available from Hefei.

What to Eat:

Shitai dishes are characterized by strong flavors, whether sour or spicy. The "Don't-miss" local delicacies include mushroom dishes, dried fermented tofu, and fried dumplings.

Where to Stay:

Hotels in the county seat of Shitai are reasonably priced, generally 200 yuan per night for a standard room. Family inns are also available in villages to provide tourists a genuine experience of rural life.

What to Buy:

Primarily natural products, including wild vegetables and local green tea.

Text by Zhao Yue

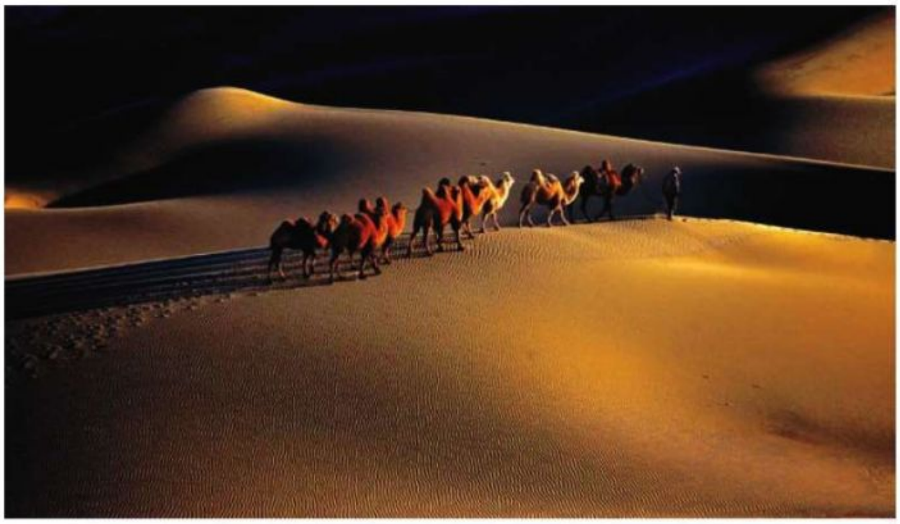
Pictures

With his 2002 film *Hero*, director Zhang Yimou made the then unknown Ejina Banner an instant star. Audiences throughout the world were mesmerized by the place's golden leaves flying all over the sky. In the northwest corner of Inner Mongolia, Ejina Banner is 400 kilometers from Jiuquan, notable for its satellite launches, and borders both Gansu Province and the country of Mongolia.

Dead poplar trees create a variety of shapes. by Wan Quan

in the SAND

Included in Ejina's diverse terrain are vast expanses of the Gobi Desert along with gorgeous poplar forests. Considered a camel hub of Inner Mongolia, Ejina is also home to a lengthy history and fascinating nomadic customs, which make it a popular draw for photographers.



Camels in the Gobi desert. CFP

Tourists in the desert. by Wan Quan

The Gobi desert. by Wan Quan

Visitors to Ejina can stay in a yurt for the night. by Chen Bo

Desert Hero

Tall poplars and thick rose willows flourish in Ejina's vast wilderness. Flocks of sheep roam down slopes of sand dunes and through the woods as the setting sun produces a glowing silhouette of passing camels. It's no wonder such scenery attracts picture-takers from near and far.

Along with its plentiful camels, the area's wealth of poplars have also caused it to be dubbed the poplar capital, and there is little doubt that it is an ideal place to shoot and study poplars in China. From October to November is the best time to enjoy poplars because the sudden temperature drop paints the forests golden. In only a few days, the woods completely transform from lush green to radiant shades of yellow. With the backdrop of blue skies and vast expanses of desert, the vistas can be stunning. As the temperature continues to drop, falling leaves become another big attraction for photographers and tourists. Recently, Ejina has been hosting an annual poplar festival in early October, during which the photography contest is a central event.

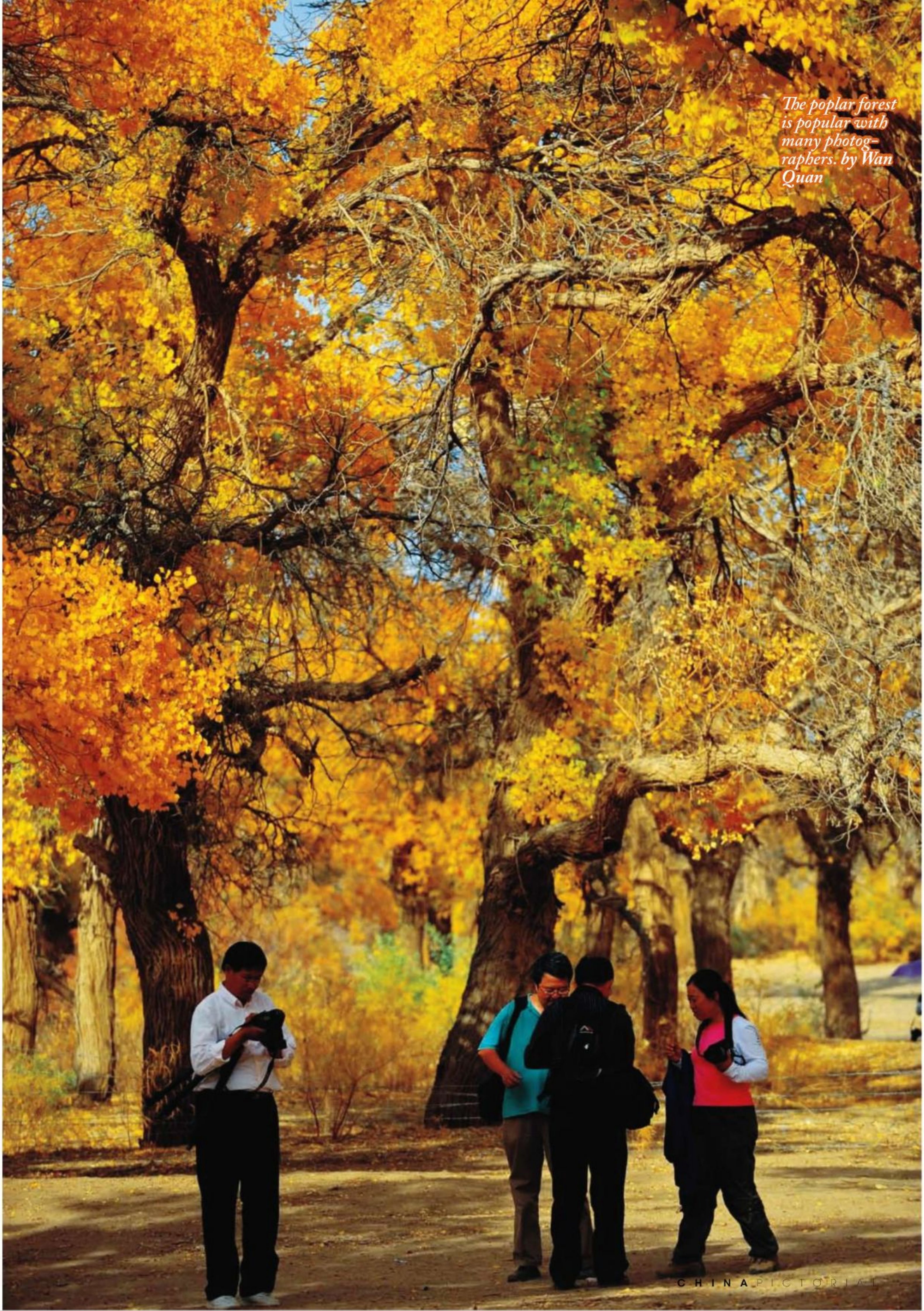
Ejina's poplars huddle around the cyclical Ejina River. The densest forests can be found around branches of the river, with Erdaoqiao, Sidaoqiao, and Badaoqiao being the most popular scenic spots. Each spot was named after one of eight bridges that span the river. East of Ejina's Dalaihubu Town, a bridge provides dry crossing of the river every two or three kilometers, starting from Yidaoqiao (literally "first bridge") to Badaoqiao, the eighth. All of them are smothered by dense poplars. Well-read visitors have even jokingly compared the place to *The Bridges of Madison County*, even though Ejina has one more bridge than the seven of the locale featured in the novel.

The Ghostly Quaint Forest

About 28 kilometers southwest of Ejina's Dalaihubu Town is a formerly dense forest of now-dead poplars. The so-called Quaint Forest is the remains of a former poplar forest that was consumed by the desert when the river altered its course. The forest has now been desolate for centuries, and through passage of time and changes in dynasties, the dead wood hasn't decayed.

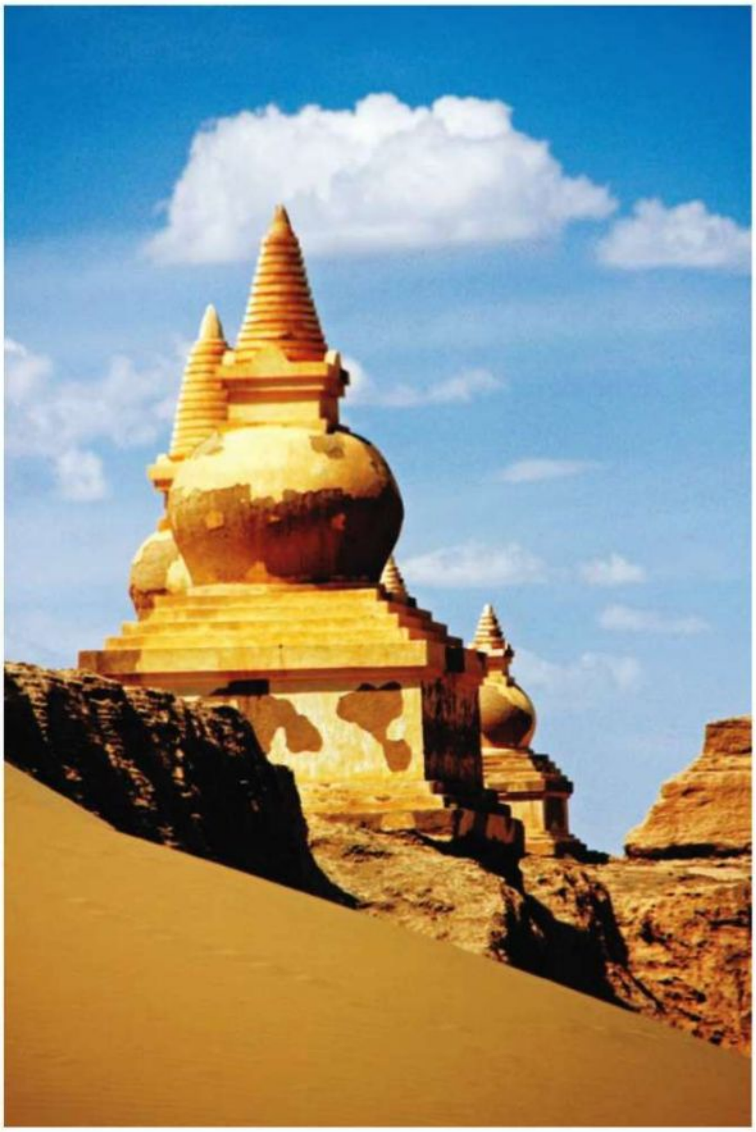
The Quaint Forest was once a lush primeval woods. Hehei and Beida Rivers, both originating in the Qilian Mountains, converge in Ejina to form a fan-shaped forest belt across the desert. However, over time the waterways change, resulting in large areas of dead trees such as the peculiar Quaint Forest.

Dead poplars can be found in a variety of shapes. Some remain standing upright, some have fallen completely horizontal, and others can even resemble animal bones. The seemingly endless ghost forest presents a stark contrast with glowing golden woods nearby — the juxtaposition becoming a favorite subject for photographers. A photographer with the internet handle "Black Coffee" described his experience of shooting the sunset at



The poplar forest is popular with many photographers. by Wan Quan

The Black City, a renowned scenic spot around Ejina. The city was constructed by West Xia Kingdom (1038-1227). by ***Chen Bo***



A yurt in the poplar forest. by ***Wan Quan***

The golden poplar forest. by ***Wan Quan***

the Quaint Forest on his blog: "When the evening glow pervades the sky, the dead poplars cast shadows in various shapes, harkening to the magnificence and vastness of life."

Past and Present Juyan Lake

When Juyan Lake is mentioned, Ejina River is usually not far behind. In the lower reaches of the Heihe River System, Ejina River's source is also in the snow of Qilian Mountains. Historically, Juyan once referred to three lakes combined, but today only two remain: West Juyan Lake and East.

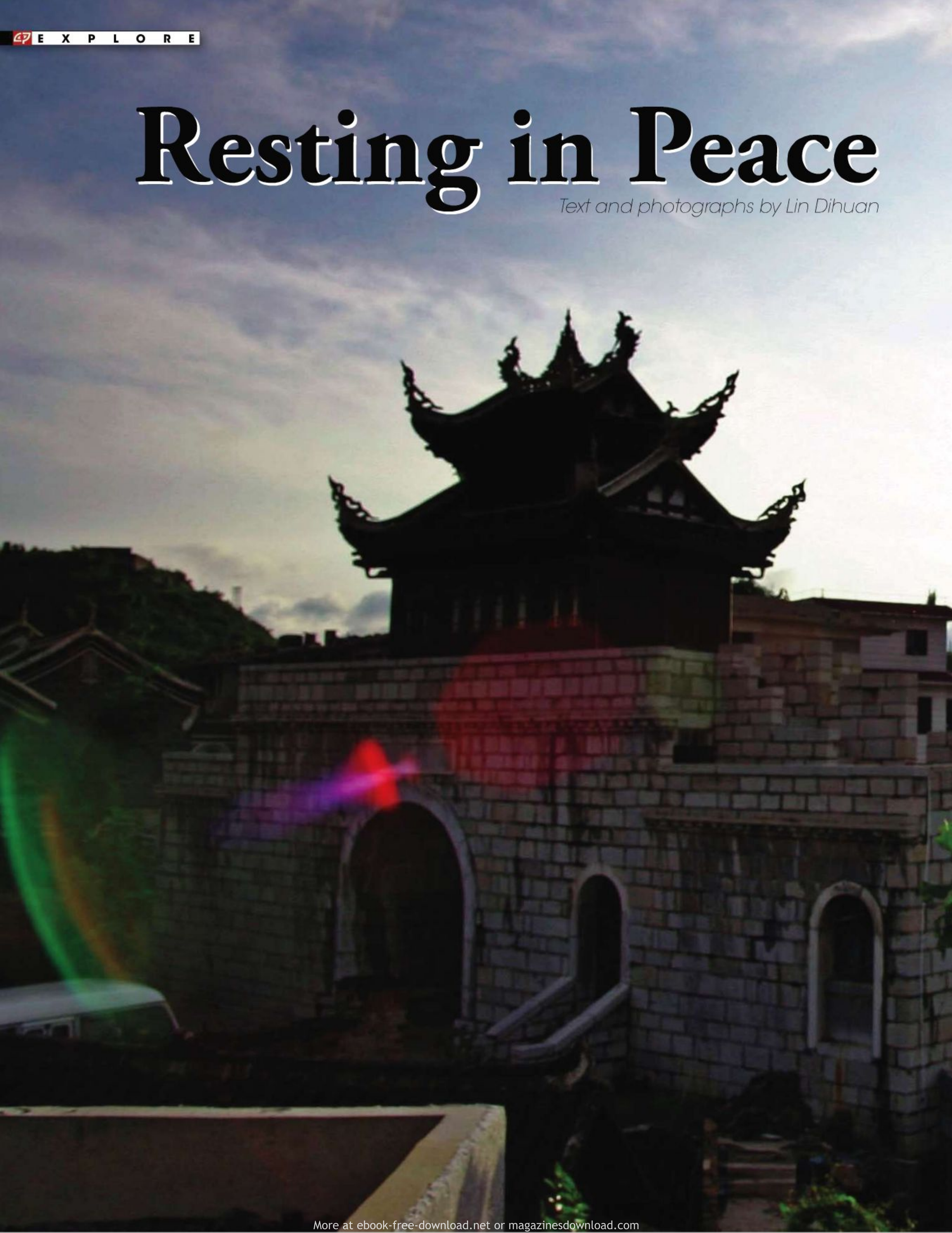
In ancient times, Juyan was notably fertile. With an abundance of water resources, thick seas of emerald grassland flourished on the banks, and the river nourished one of the oldest agricultural areas in China, playing an important role in the development of Northwest China's ethnic groups. Last century, Ejina River began shrinking, and consequently Juyan Lake began drying up. However, in recent years, improved ecological measures have helped Juyan Lake regain some of its glistening splendor.

Visitors to Ejina, especially photographers, should not miss catching the sunrise at Juyan Lake. Before the sun rises each day, scores of people will already be eagerly crowding the shore. Of course, most of the optimum viewing spots are usually occupied by tripods and lenses aimed at the place where the sun will reveal itself. To ensure the best view, some visitors will even camp on the lake overnight. The morning breeze can be quite chilly, but for those shivering through the darkness, the arrival of each stunning ray of light will surely bring piercing warmth.

Juyan Lake. by Wan Quan

Resting in Peace

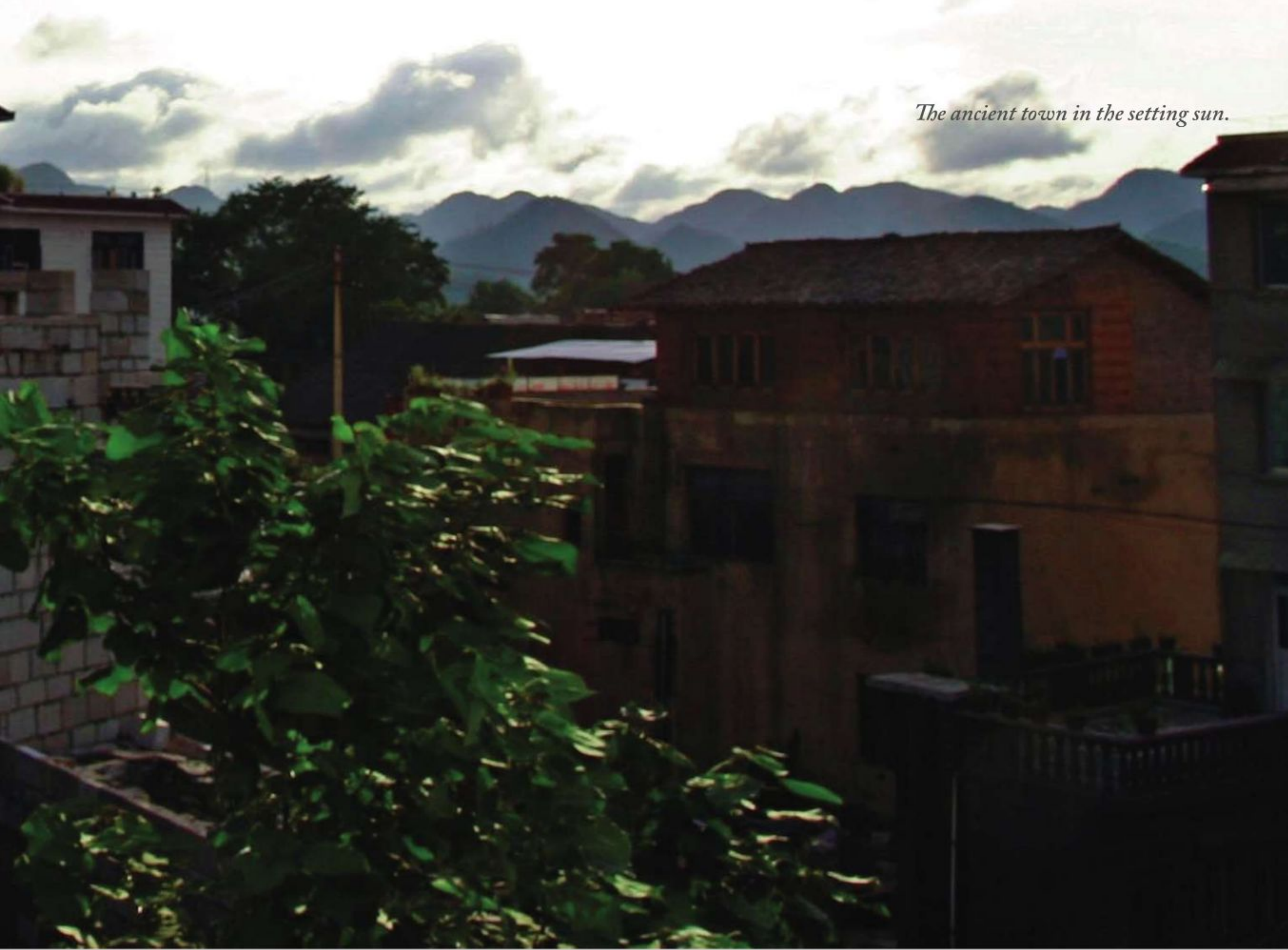
Text and photographs by Lin Dihuan



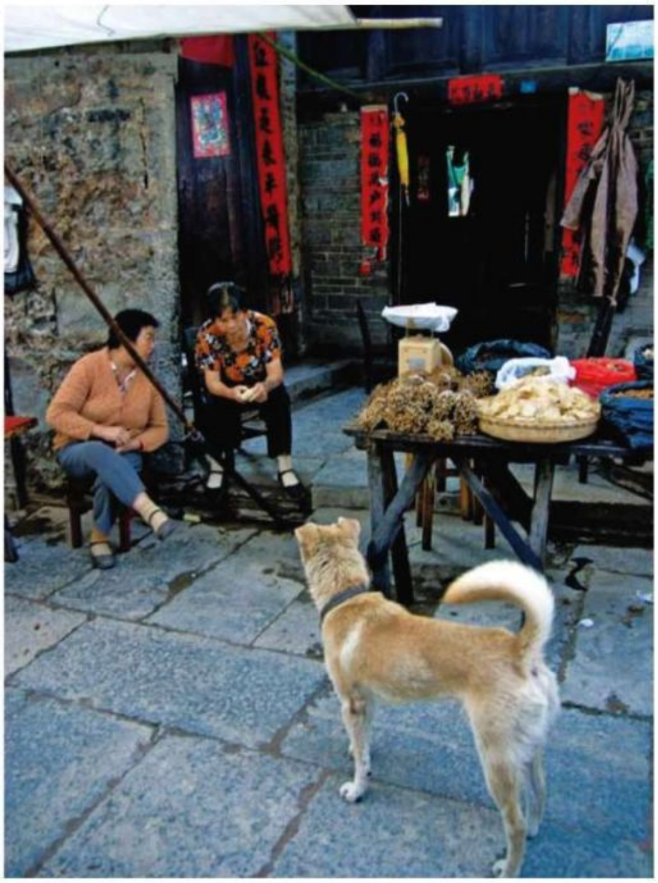
I first experienced ancient Qingyan Town on a sunny summer afternoon. As the sun slowly slipped over the horizon, bathing the town in a glowing orange, everyone I met seemed slightly sluggish, and I started feeling a bit in slow-motion myself. While roaming aimlessly amidst the archaic stone houses, my focus was pulled to sunflowers frequently emerging from walls along with weeds peeking out of cracks. The drowsy silence was only interrupted by chirps of sparrows gliding through the pristine sky.

Qingyan is less than 30 kilometers from Guiyang, capital of China's southwestern Guizhou Province, and modern transportation from Guiyang is convenient. Travelers often make a stop in Huaxi to try their famous rice noodles, and from there Qingyan is only 10 minutes by car. Centuries ago, during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Qingyan was only a border fort, and its residents were only a few dozen soldiers. When the men gazed longingly toward their hometowns to the north, their view was blocked by the steep green cliffs of Dajiang Hill. The fort's name became Qingyan, which literally means "green cliff."

An old man smokes a long tobacco pipe at the gate of a local rest home.



The ancient town in the setting sun.



Local women kill time chatting with each other.

Over the years, the fort transformed into a bustling town populated by a variety of transient merchants, stationed soldiers, and immigrants from other inland areas. Before long, many were settling down permanently in the town, some because they fell in love with the land, and others because they sought a better life. These people became the ancestors of those who now call Qingyan home.

Guizhou's first ever *zhuangyuan* (meaning "Top Scholar," a title conferred to the highest scorer on the imperial examination), Zhao Yijiong, was born in Qingyan during the reign of Emperor Xianfeng of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). At 29, Zhao traveled the long distance to the capital for the highest imperial examination, which led to impressing Emperor Guangxu with his distinguished literary abilities enough to earn the title of *zhuangyuan*. Despite his unprecedented fame in literary circles nationwide and especially in Guizhou, Zhao was not quite so successful in his official career. After retiring, he returned to his hometown and served as a teacher until his death at the age of 49. Today, his former residence is still well-preserved in Qingyan. Surrounded by courtyards shaded by laurel trees and filled with stone stairs covered with moss, the once-private mansion has been converted into a tourist destination where visitors can tour the house and even stay the night.

An important commercial hub of Guizhou, Qingyan attracted a considerable population of foreign missionaries by the mid-19th century. Nowadays, a stroll through town can lead visitors past many religious structures, including not only Buddhist and Taoist temples, but also Christian cathedrals.

The town retains its original layout from the Ming and Qing dynasties. Lining its stone-paved streets are countless shops, many of which preserve authentic wood or stone counters to display local products, crafts, and ethnic costumes and accessories. Typically, teahouses and restaurants are decorated with traditional wooden signs, which fuel the nostalgic aura. They are complemented by plentiful memorial archways, of which the most famous is for Zhao Lilun, a villager who is thought to have lived for 102 years. Its stone-carved lions were highly praised by Liu Haisu, a prominent Chinese artist.

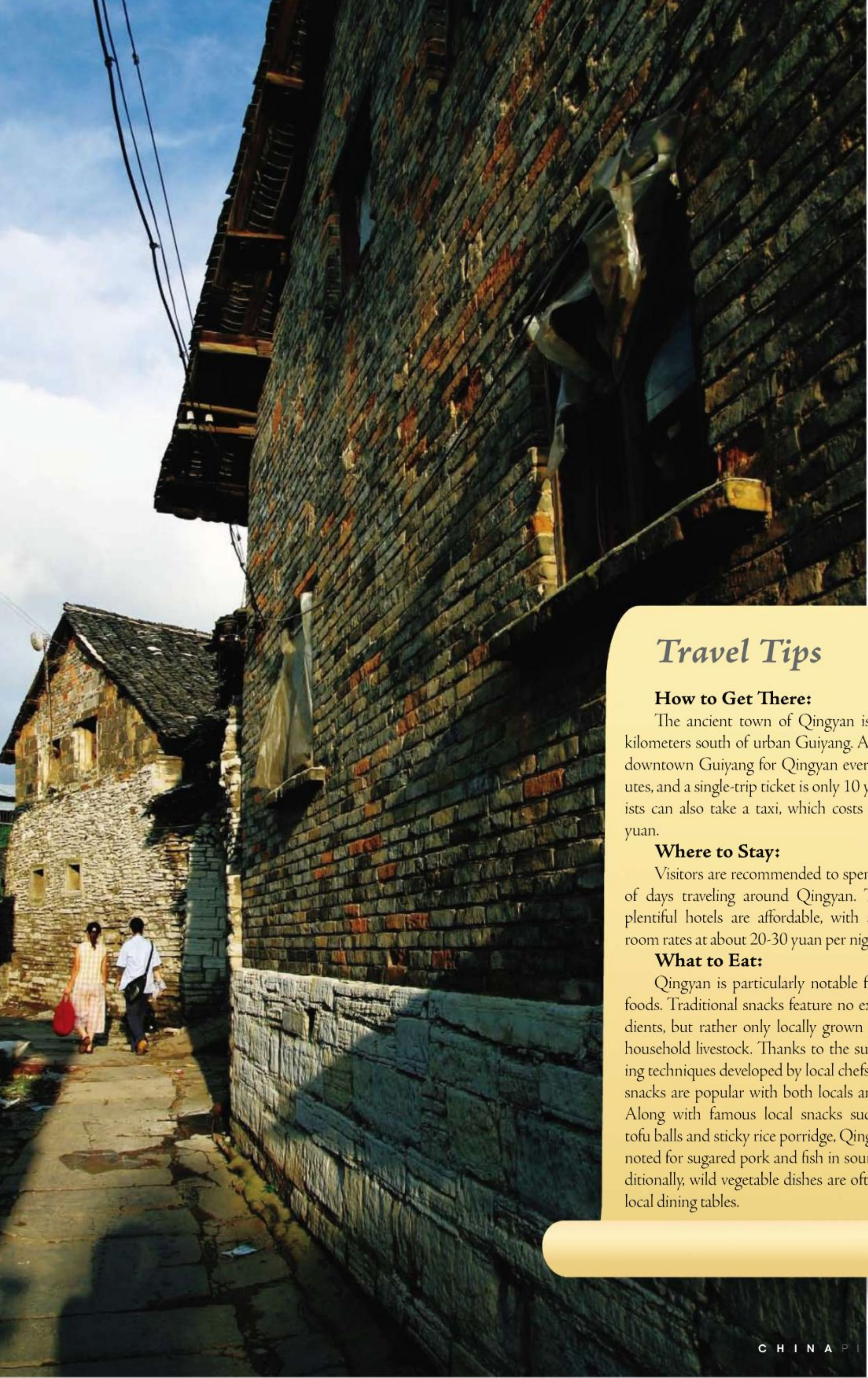
Qingyan features many tofu workshops that still use manpowered stone mills. In one workshop, an elderly woman was pushing a stone mill, as white soybean juice dripped from it. The hospitable shopkeeper treated me to a bowl of fresh tofu. The delicious treat stimulated my appetite, so I spent the rest of the afternoon wandering around town tasting local snacks such as rose candy, pear wine, rose wine, and salted pork.

Visitors to the ancient town will encounter dogs sleeping in streets, roadside fortune tellers eager to reveal the future, elderly artisans crafting wood barrels, and local women embroidering butterflies. They can haggle with peddlers about the prices of never-before-seen foods and vegetables or crash a local wedding (strangers are often welcomed to take part in the feast). Most who are lucky enough to visit leave with a spiritual comfort from experiencing a completely different way of life.

At dusk, I turned back from outside the ancient town's south gate to marvel at the gate tower glowing magnificently in the rays of the setting sun. A stone wall stretched from the tower and disappeared below the horizon. A plaque on the gate tower reading "Guang Ding Gate" gradually disappeared into the encroaching darkness.

As black settled over the land, frogs in paddy fields began to sing. On their way home, farmers passed through the gate with hands clasped behind their backs. A shepherd led his flock with a flute, and the melodic whistle inspired birds to hover over the woods.

Qingyan was just one stop on my journey across southwestern China. Throughout my life, I have visited many other ancient towns, but in my memory, none rival the peacefulness and tranquility of Qingyan.



A stone-paved road is lined with traditional residences.

Travel Tips

How to Get There:

The ancient town of Qingyan is about 29 kilometers south of urban Guiyang. A bus leaves downtown Guiyang for Qingyan every five minutes, and a single-trip ticket is only 10 yuan. Tourists can also take a taxi, which costs about 100 yuan.

Where to Stay:

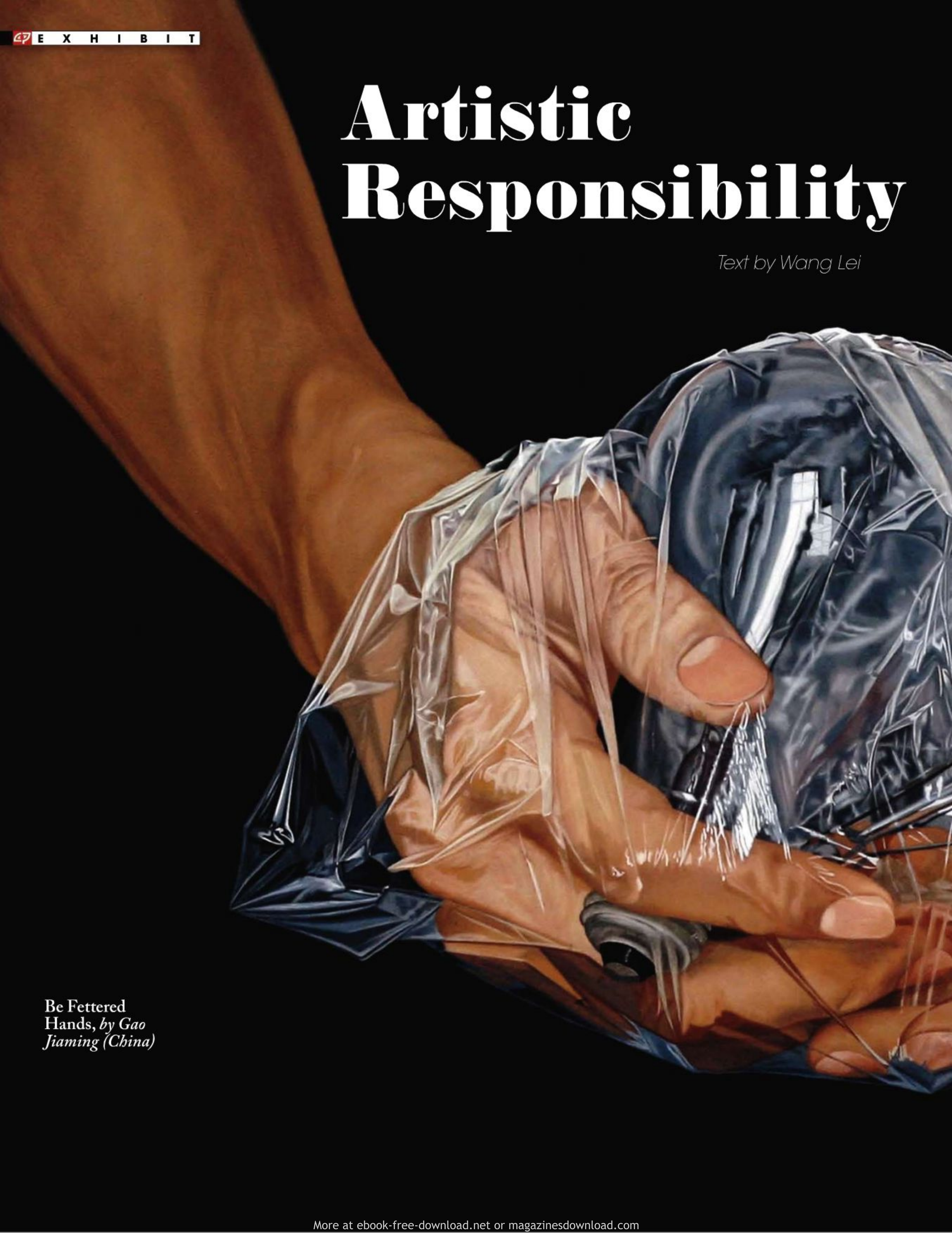
Visitors are recommended to spend a couple of days traveling around Qingyan. The town's plentiful hotels are affordable, with a standard room rates at about 20-30 yuan per night.

What to Eat:

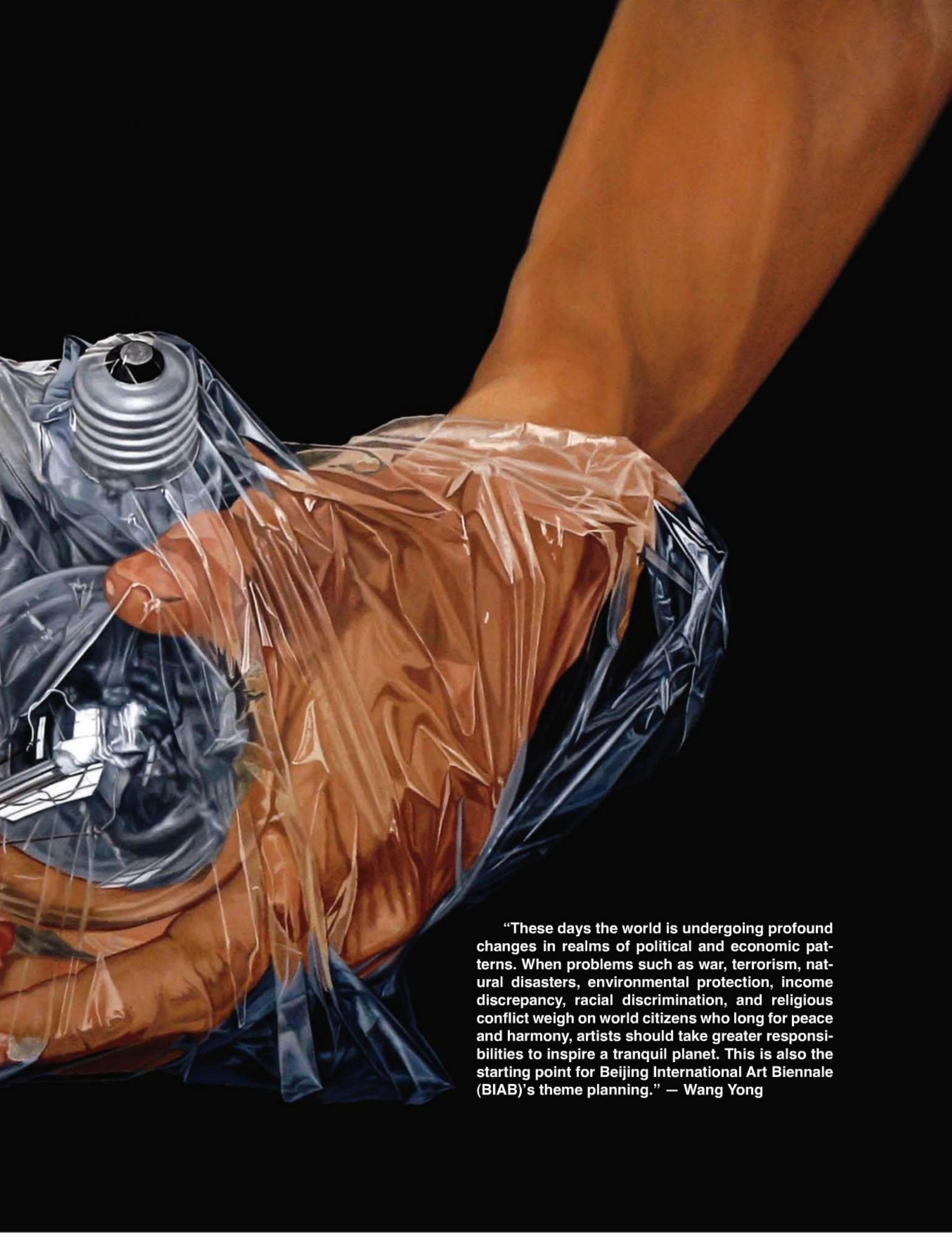
Qingyan is particularly notable for its local foods. Traditional snacks feature no exotic ingredients, but rather only locally grown grains and household livestock. Thanks to the superb cooking techniques developed by local chefs, the native snacks are popular with both locals and tourists. Along with famous local snacks such as fried tofu balls and sticky rice porridge, Qingyan is also noted for sugared pork and fish in sour soup. Additionally, wild vegetable dishes are often seen on local dining tables.

Artistic Responsibility

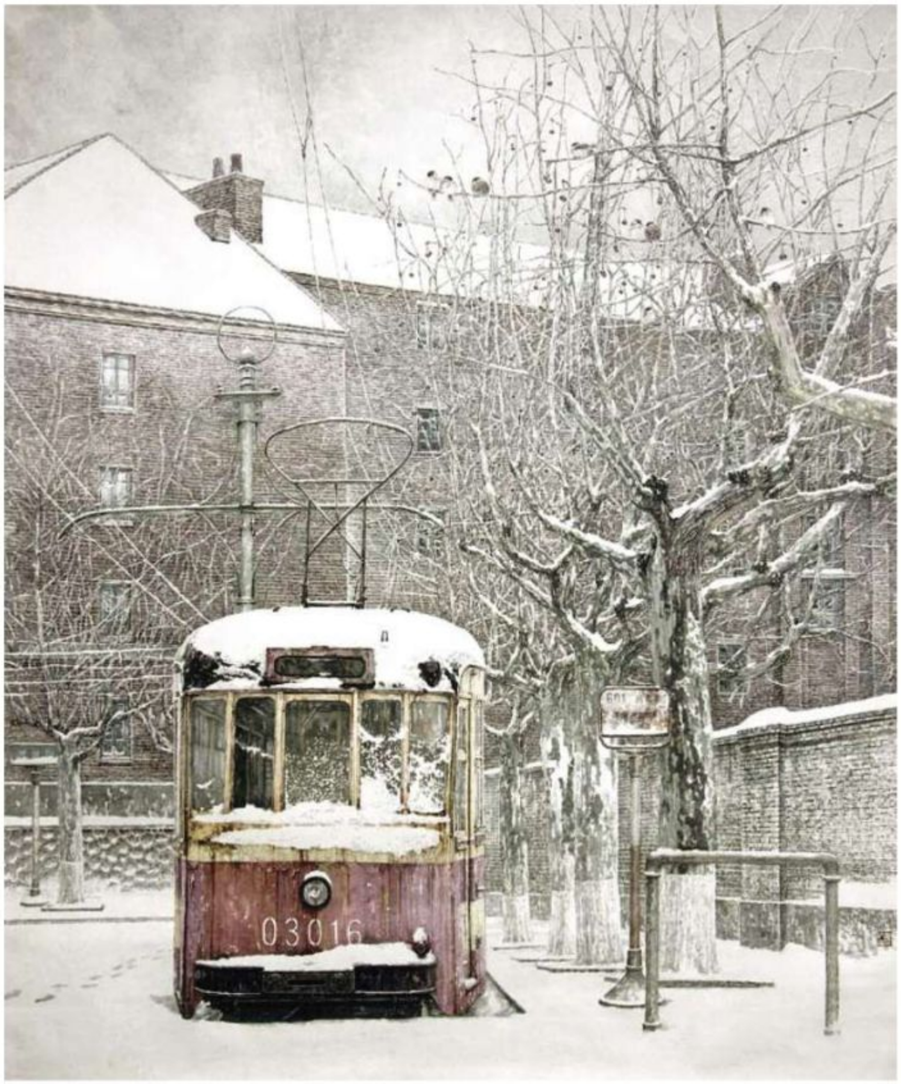
Text by Wang Lei



Be Fettered Hands, *by Gao Jiaming (China)*



“These days the world is undergoing profound changes in realms of political and economic patterns. When problems such as war, terrorism, natural disasters, environmental protection, income discrepancy, racial discrimination, and religious conflict weigh on world citizens who long for peace and harmony, artists should take greater responsibilities to inspire a tranquil planet. This is also the starting point for Beijing International Art Biennale (BIAB)’s theme planning.” — Wang Yong



Fairy Tales in Winter, *by Huang Hongtao (China)*

In early October, the Fourth BIAB was hosted at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing, displaying more than 500 pieces from all over the world. Wang Yong, organizer and founder of the biennale, shared some details with *China Pictorial.*

Young BIAB

In January 2002, Wang Yong was a researcher and doctoral tutor with Chinese National Academy of Arts when he was invited to attend the 10th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh. After participating, Wang began brainstorming how to host a biennale in Beijing. He described the mission of the biennale in one report: "With its worldwide and continuous impact, the International Art Biennale has gradually developed into a window for cultural exchange, a platform to exhibit culture strength and artistic aesthetics of individual nations, and a symbol of a nation or a city's international cultural status." With this in mind, he went on to declare, "If China wants to be a trendsetter in global cultural development, the nation should host the event as soon as possible."

In 2003, the First Beijing Biennale opened. From 2005 to 2008, the biennale was presented twice more. A total of 45 countries participated in the first biennale, and the number soared to 85 by the fourth, totaling 12,000 individual entries. In terms of the number of participating nationalities, BIAB has now surpassed the renowned Venice and Sao Paulo Biennales.

"It is still early to be optimistic about the numbers," Wang cautioned. "Take the Venice Biennale as an example. It has been hosting for more than 100 years and attracted more than 370,000 visitors last year, which still trumps the Beijing event." When speaking of the Beijing Biennale's international status, Wang is clear-headed. "We are young — that's both an advantage and disadvantage."

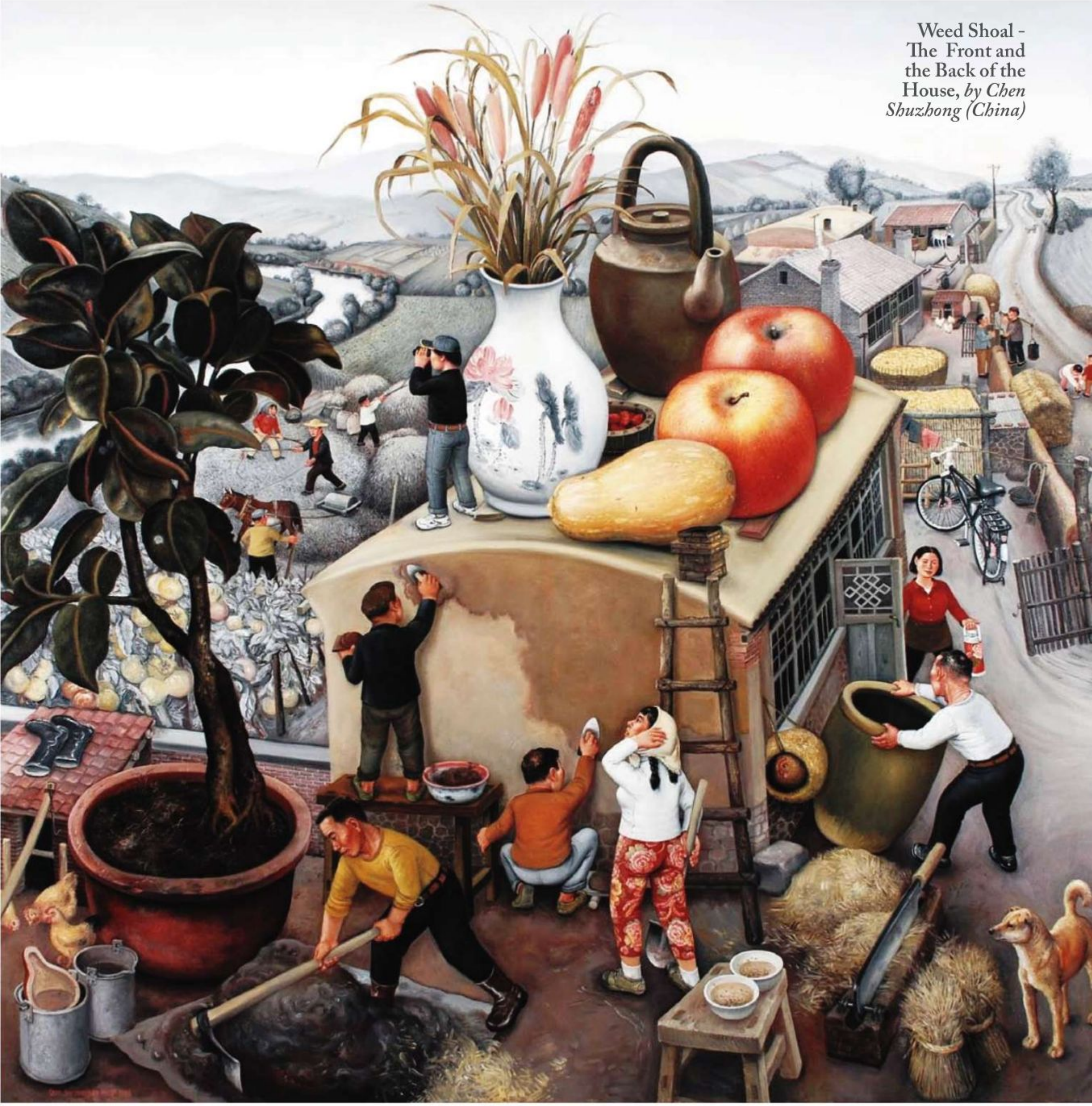
Art and Reality

Wildlife extinction, industrial pollution, and global warming — Nowhere on Earth is immune to glaring modern global environmental problems, and art presents a different focus on these issues. In the most recent BIAB, 398 foreign works were displayed along with 164 Chinese pieces. The exhibits include traditional Chinese paintings, oil paintings, prints, watercolors, lacquer paintings, sculptures, and mixed media. In 10 exhibition halls, the 562 pieces in a wide range of styles converge to demonstrate humanity's common desire for beauty, nature, and homeland.

Compared with the themes of previous Beijing Biennales, this year's theme "Environment Concern and Human Existence" is notably heavier. A healthy ecology in today's society is more difficult to realize than in any other time in history. Increasingly frequent natural disasters cause thinkers to ponder the future of the global environment. The Fourth BIAB fuses ideas related to ecological environment and homeland construction together, deepening the significance of the event.

When discussing themes of the biennale, Wang has his own ideas. "We once considered a theme purely from an art perspective," he explains. "But when we began planning, we couldn't help but pay increasing attention to global issues that affect everyone on the planet. Nowadays, some artists are too obsessed with modernity, which makes art more difficult for normal folks to appreciate. The Beijing Biennale became rational and full of explorative spirit to exhibit different views compared with other biennales in the world."

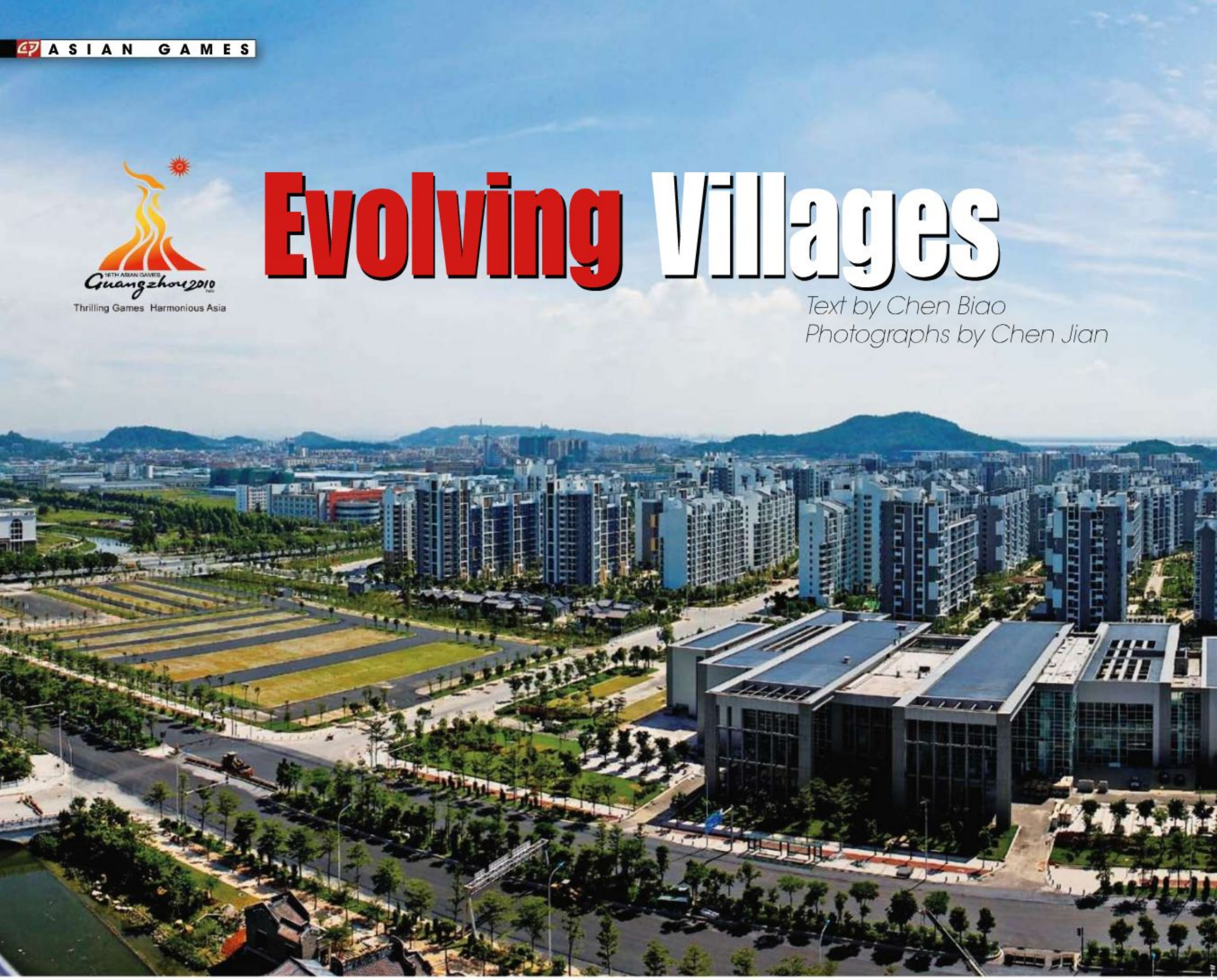
Wang concluded by quoting Wu Changjiang, vice president of China Artists Association, who noted that "This is also the responsibilities of artists."



Weed Shoal - The Front and the Back of the House, *by Chen Shuzhong (China)*

Evolving Villages

Text by Chen Biao
Photographs by Chen Jian



The Asian Games Town will become a new district in southern Guangzhou after the event.

Village to Town

In the history of grand sports gatherings, the living quarters serving the events have mostly been in the form of "villages." The village for the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, however, is more comparable to a town with plentiful amenities for living, shopping, relaxation, and of course competition.

"After the Games, the Town will transform into a well-facilitated urban community," remarks Peng Gaofeng, director of the Venues Department, GAGOC.

Asian Games Town enjoys quite a few regional advantages. It neighbors Mt. Lianhua (Lotus), a national Grade AAAA scenic spot in the north, Shiziyang, an estuary off the main course of the Pearl River to the east, along with Nansha District of Guangzhou, and to the south features two expressways and three crisscrossing subway lines.

Asian Games Town was constructed in Shilou Town, which is located at the heart of the urban areas of the

Those passing the Haibang Station of Guangzhou's Number 4 Subway Line often turn their heads to see the massive sports mural helping to gear the city up for the Asian Games. An 800-meter-long corridor leads pedestrians to the Asian Games Town, full of modern, classical, and exotic structures serving as the Media Village, Athletes' Village, and Technical Officials' Village, amongst many others.

Asian Games Town is located in the Panyu District of southern Guangzhou and covers 2.73 square kilometers of land. It is divided into seven major parts which are the Main Media Center, Logistics Area, Gymnasium, and Asian Games Park, along with the Athletes', Technical Officials' and Media Villages. The facilities are ready to accommodate 14,700 athletes and team officials, 10,000 media representatives, 2,800 technical officials, and 18,000 staff members, as well as 6,300 participants in the Asian Para Games.

Pearl River Delta. After the Games, it will become home for over a million residents.

Guangzhou Speed

It goes without saying that the Guangzhou Asian Games have not attracted as much attention as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. Nevertheless, those familiar with the event have been impressed by the tremendous efforts the people of Guangzhou have made in their acceleration towards the Games, coining the phrase "Guangzhou speed."

The construction of Asian Games Town commenced on November 26, 2007, when the area was nothing more than a vast expanse of fields, fish ponds, plants, and villages. It took less than a year to complete land acquisition and relocation of residents. Within 10 months, a brand-new town rose from the ground, featuring 100 buildings with a floor space of 1.5 million square meters.

The Athletes' Village is located at the center of the Asian Games Town.

Facilities

When roaming down the long corridor connecting to the subway, one can admire buildings such as the Media Village, Main Media Center, and the Sports Center, as well as typical structures featuring strong flavor of the water regions of Lingnan, with streams winding their way beneath little bridges.

Of the 12 newly built venues, the most impressive is the Sports Center, which is considered an iconic structure of the Games. It is the first of its kind to have exhibition halls inside the building.

"The top of the building not only varies in shape, but with different building materials," notes Deng Xinyong, the chief designer. "The maximum width of the building is 99 meters, and 10,000 tons of steel were used."

According to one official, a rainwater collection system was installed for environmental protection and energy conservation. "The water

Lingnan-flavored structures.

The Technical Officials' Village.

can be used to irrigate plants in Asian Games Town," he explains, "thus minimizing the need for tap water."

Heat insulation material installed on the top of the building saves an estimated 60 percent of necessary heating or cooling energy, surpassing the national standard of 50 percent.

Adjacent to the subway station, the Media Village is highlighted in three colors: white, black, and yellow. It is composed of 29 buildings varying from 15 to 22 stories tall with rooms measuring from 60 to 90 square meters.

The Athletes' Village was placed at the very center of Asian Games Town, lying east of the Media Village. The building complex features strong Lingnan flavor with room to accommodate 14,700 athletes and team officials as well as 6,300 Asian Para Games participants.

The lobby of each building in the Athletes' Village is equipped with a service desk and a vending machine. Each block features a service center with meeting rooms, an internet café, video games, and staff members who are prepared to provide guest reception, news releases, and volunteer services.

In the east of Asian Games Town is the Technical Officials' Village near the bank of the Lijiang River, where a U-shaped turn forms a small island.

Rooms in the Technical Officials' Village are well designed with an excellent atmosphere. Windows facing south provide plentiful sunlight and fresh air, and even the smallest room is spacious at 130 square meters. The largest room measures 320 square meters, and some of them even have gardens.

Environmentally Friendly

Ever since the day that Guangzhou was named host of the 2010 Asian Games, a top priority in the preparation process has been keeping everything "environmentally friendly." Although not immune to the financial crisis, the government of Guangzhou has shown little hesitation in investing large sums of money in state-of-the-art technology to ensure energy conservation and environmental protection.

To provide comfortable living conditions for athletes, a vacuum garbage collection system was installed underground along with other urban infrastructural necessities like water, gas, and sewage pipes. Any trash dumped into the system travels through the pipes at speeds of 50 to 70 k.p.h. to the central station, where it is compacted, sealed, and transported by trucks to a disposal plant for final treatment. The entire process is completely removed from the residents, thus minimizing odor, air pollution, and visual discomfort.

Other technologies, such as solar power and water source heat pump systems, have also been widely implemented to provide hot water with renewable energy sources. Solar panels grace the tops of buildings in the Main Media Center, providing half of their necessary energy and hot water throughout the year.

Solar energy has been well utilized in the Main Media Center.

The 13th Beijing Music Festival

The 13th Beijing Music Festival and the 8th Beijing International Symphony Concert was hold in October, 2010. This year, the festival focus was "From Baroque to Contemporary Music".

2010 marks the bicentennial of two great composers: Frederic Chopin and Robert Schumann, both legendary performers in their own right who enriched the repertory of the piano. Festival invited three outstanding Chinese young pianists——Lang Lang, YUNDI and Sa Chen — for three concerts to celebrate these two musical giants.

A group of international renowned musicians also presented: the world famous, "Polish Beethoven", composer and conductor Krzysztof Penderecki; one of the most distinguished exponents of the historically informed early music movement, conductor and harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood; and so on.

Picture shows: Mr. Lang Lang (L) was welcomed by Ms. Jenni Hartatik, EAM - Revenue & Marketing of Swissôtel Beijing upon his arrival.

A Peruvian Journey @ Swissotel Beijing

Don't miss the chance to see the most rewarded Executive Chef Reto Steinemann with his culinary team from Swissôtel Lima in Peru for the 1st time in Beijing. Chef Reto, bring his passion is presenting us a fresh, healthy and pure Peru contemporary cuisine with Spanish zest. Buffet and a la carte menu are available in Café Swiss during this period.

Date: October 30th to November 13th, 2010,
Time: 11:30 – 14:00 and 18:00 to 22:00 daily
Venue: Café Swiss in Swissôtel Beijing
Price: RMB198.00 per person Lunch Buffet
RMB228.00 per person Dinner Buffet
*all above prices are subject to 15% service charge
For more information and reservation: (86 10) 6553 2288 ext. 2127

Green Travel

Initiated by Top Travel magazine and China Green Foundation, the launch of "Green Travel" was held at Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing on 26 August 2010. Famous artists Tong Dawei, Lu Yi, Bao Lei, Ming Dao, Qin Lan, Sha Yi, Kong Wei, Yao Di, participated in this significant opening ceremony, along with 200 guests from the travel, auto, finance, communications and other industries.

12 hand-painted works based on the theme of "Green Travel" by the above mentioned stars will be printed on four travel packs: a foldable water bag, passport holder, foldable mess kit, and washing kit. Available at Caesar tourism outlets, these packs will be sold to Chinese travelers in a bid to reduce their consumption of disposable travel items. Proceeds from the sale will be donated to the China Green Foundation for planting in Gansu.

Shangri-la's Kerry Center Hotel Helps Out at Children Hope Family

On a drizzling Friday afternoon on 17 September 2010, a quiet children's home in the Changping district of Beijing, transformed into a happy playground with much laughter, as a group of Kerry Centre Hotel staff brought care and love to the physically-disabled children.

"Apart from participating in strategic corporate-driven initiatives, the hotel is committed towards volunteering within our local community. We believe in the long-term development of these children to help them secure a future of self-efficiency and self-sustainability," said Roc Huang, Resident Manager, who led the team of 10 volunteers for the visit.

Before the visit, the hotel organised an internal donation drive and auction in order to raise funds for the home. When the auction hammer dropped, the total amount raised was RMB5000.

Queen Crab

Guanyuan Chinese Restaurant of Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown presents the top-class hairy crabs for your adoration.

Every order of one hairy crab with: two complementary pieces of steamed pork dumpling with crab roe and one cup of ginger tea.

Opening Hours:
Mon. to Sun.: 11:30am -- 2:30pm
Valid until November 30, 2010
Not applicable to any discount program or cash vouchers
Venue: Guan Yuan Chinese Restaurant, 2nd floor, Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown
Tel: 86-10-6833 8822 ext. 7224

Intercontinental Beijing Financial Street Celebrates 'Responsible Business Day'

InterContinental Hotels, in partnership with National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations creates "Responsible Business Day" on September 21, 2010. Together, we participate in activities to sustain and enhance each hotel's local destination, and regularly take actions to ensure the location remains an appealing place to visit for future generations.

In Beijing, we organized a Community Action Tour to benefit several community assistance organizations who we sponsor throughout the year: We began the day presenting a staff donation for Zhouqu flood victims to rebuild their homes, and ended the day visiting with children of the Xicheng District to present them with annual tuition fees for their schooling.

Bring Out the Devil in You

"Trick or treat?"

Authentic and impressive variety of red devil themed dinner buffet is served at Valley Café. We recommend pan fried salmon steak with dill cream sauce, Chinese B.B.Q platter, roasted beef fillet and much, much more. Exclusively available only on 31 October 2010; you may also take home the Halloween spirit with our specially designed pumpkin-shaped cake.

Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun
Tel: +86 10 5993 8888
No.106 Zhi Chun Road, Hai Dian District, 100086
Beijing, P.R.China

White Truffles at Aria in China World Hotel, Beijing

In keeping with Aria Chef de Cuisine Matthew McCool's "classic and innovative European" cuisine, Aria celebrates the glorious fungus with a truffle-themed degustation menu in November.

Tempt your tastebuds with such delicious offerings as lobster ravioli with white truffle, duck breast with milk skin and white truffle, as well as chicken liver parfait with truffle. White truffles make the ideal complement to a soft, warm winter menu. For reservations, please call (86 10)6505 2266 ext 36, or call the Restaurant Reservations Centre at tel: (86 10)6505 5838.

A Taste of Malaysia at Scene a Cafe in China World Hotel, Beijing

Scene a Café Chef de Cuisine Justin Kam, a native Malaysian with more than 20 years of culinary experience, invites discerning food lovers to experience flavours, aromas and colours of exotic Malaysian cuisine at Scene a Cafe's lunch and dinner buffet, which highlights some exquisitely crafted dishes such as Kerabu Mangga, Nyonya Curry Kapitan and Assam Prawn.

Lunch buffet at RMB 258+ 15% service charge per person, and dinner buffet at RMB 298+ plus 15% service charge per person (excluding Friday night buffet and Sunday Brunch).

Valid from 8 to 21 Nov. 2010
For reservations, please call (86 10) 6505 2266 ext 35 or call the Restaurant Reservations Centre at tell: (86 10)6505 5838.

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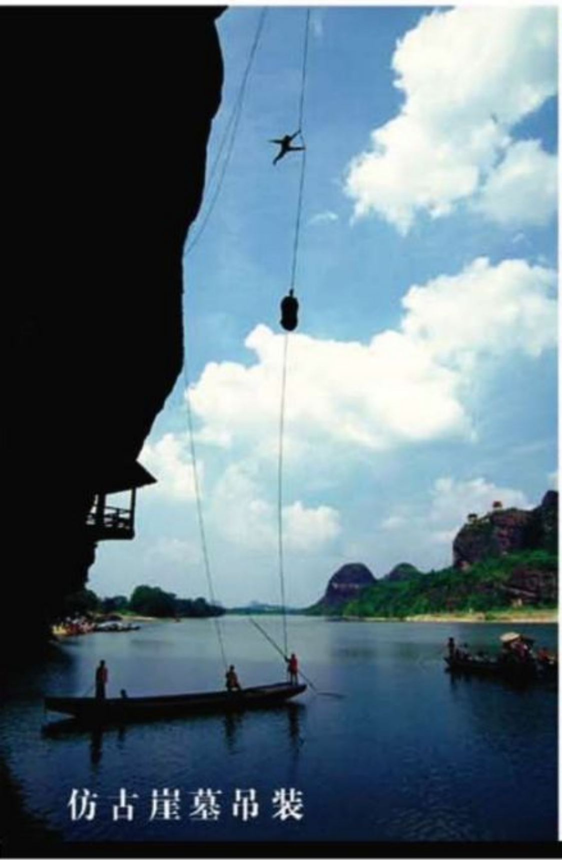
仙水岩景色
The view of Xianshui Rock

There Exists A Millennium Place in China!

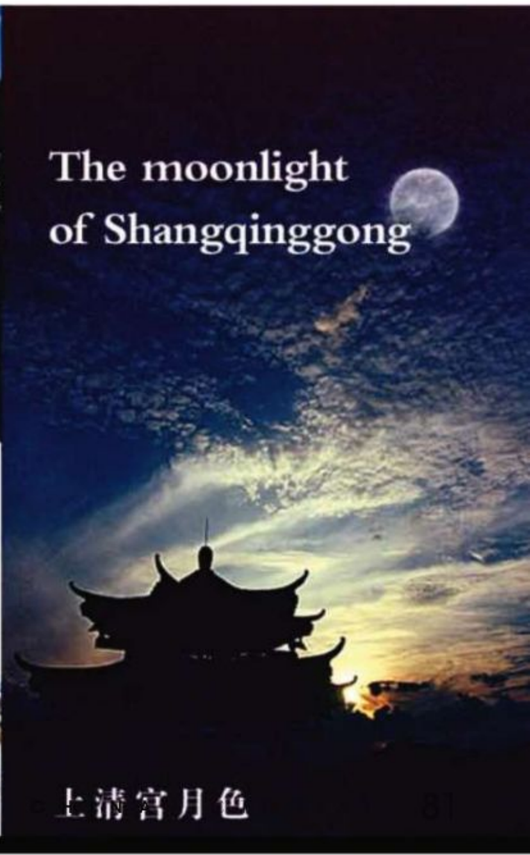
--the Taoist Holy Place in China the World Geopark Dragon and Tiger Mountain in Jiangxi



仿古崖墓吊装

Taoist Temple 山顶道观

The new tourist centre
新游客中心



The moonlight of Shangqinggong

上清宫月色

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